A Companion to Isidore of Seville

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Abbreviations

Antigüedad y Cristianismo	*Antigüedad y Cristianismo: Monografías Históricas sobre la Antigüedad Tardía*
Arévalo	*S. Isidori Hispalensis episcopi Hispaniarum Doctoris Opera omnia, denuo correcta et aucta*, ed. Faustino Arévalo, 7 vols (Rome: 1797–1803)
BHL	Societas Bollandiana, *Bibliotheca hagiographica Latina antiquae et mediae aetatis*, Subsidia Hagiographica 6, 12, 70, 4 vols (Brussels: 1898–1986)
BL	London, British Library
BNM	Madrid, Biblioteca Nacional de España
BUV	València, Universitat de València, Biblioteca Històrica
CCH	G. Martínez Díez and F. Rodríguez, eds., *La colección canónica Hispana*, 6 vols (Madrid: 1966–2002)
CCCM	*Corpus Christianorum Continuatio Mediaevalis*
CCSL	*Corpus Christianorum Series Latina*
CGL	Georg Goetz, ed., *Corpus Glossariorum Latinorum* (Leipzig: 1901), vol. 2.
CPL	Eligius Dekkers, with Aemilius Gaar, *Clavis Patrum Latinorum* [1951], 3rd ed., Corpus Christianorum, Series Latina (Steenbrugis: 1995)
CSEL	*Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum*
EC	Ecclesia Catholica
Esc.	Real Biblioteca del Monasterio de San Lorenzo de El Escorial
Etym.	Isidore, *Etymologiae Isidori Hispalensis Episcopi Etymologiarum sive Originum libri* XX, ed. Wallace M. Lindsay, 2 vols (Oxford: 1911)
Grial-Loaisa	*Divi Isidori Hispal. episcopi Opera, Philippi* II *Cathol. Regis iussu e vetustis exemplaribus emendata*, eds. Johannes Grial, Garcia de Loaisa, et al., 2 vols (Madrid: 1599)
GL	Wallace M. Lindsay, J.F. Mountford and Joshua Whatmough, eds., *Glossaria Latina iussu Academiae Britannicae edita*, 5 vols, 1 (Paris: 1926–31)
GW	*Gesamtkatalog der Wiegendrucke*, 12 vols, in progress (Leipzig: 1925–) at <http://www.gesamtkatalogderwiegendrucke.de/>

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LV	*Lex Visigothorum*, in K. Zeumer, ed., *Leges Visigothorum.* MGH *Leges nationum Germanicarum* 1 (Hanover: 1902), 33–456
MGH	Monumenta Germaniae Historica
AA	*Auctores Antiquissimi*
Leges	*Leges nationum Germanicarum*
SRM	*Scriptores rerum Merovingicarum*
PL	J.-P. Migne, ed., *Patrologia Latina*, 221 vols (Paris: 1844–64)
P.Vis.	I. Velázquez Soriano, ed., *Las pizarras visigodas. Entre el Latín y su disgregación. La lengua hablada en Hispania, siglos VI–VIII* (Burgos: 2004).
Settimane di Studio	*Settimane di Studio del Centro Italiano di studi sull'Alto Medioevo*
USTC	Universal Short Title Catalogue <http://ustc.ac.uk/>

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PART 1

Isidore's Contexts



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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Andrew Fear and Jamie Wood

"It was arguably the most influential book, after the Bible, in the learned world of the Latin West for nearly a thousand years." This claim, made by the editors of a recent English translation of Isidore of Seville's *Etymologiae*, is not at all implausible and indicates Isidore's enormous intellectual impact across Europe.[1] Indeed, it is difficult to think of someone who has had an equal effect on European thought for an equivalent length of time. There are around 1,000 extant manuscripts of Isidore's *Etymologiae*, and this is not counting the various excerpts from it which also circulated widely.[2] Nor was the *Etymologiae* the only work of Isidore which enjoyed a high reputation: other items from his formidable output, such as the *Sententiae*, *Differentiae*, *Synonyma*, and *De Natura Rerum*, enjoyed a fame which was equally widespread.[3] Despite his influence, Isidore is nevertheless often seen as an unoriginal collector of data, and thus as a transmitter of the classical tradition rather than a contributor to it. While, like Cassiodorus before him, there can be no doubt that Isidore was a vital conduit through which passed much of the learning of the classical past that would otherwise have been lost, part of the purpose of this volume is to demonstrate that focussing solely on this element of his career is to do the bishop an injustice. The chapters in this volume, as well as much recent research, demonstrate that he was a contributor to as well as a preserver of learning.

Isidore was far from a retiring cleric and came from a family that seems to have involved itself heavily in politics.[4] Although active in the Visigothic

1 Stephen A. Barney, W.J. Lewis, J.A. Beach, and Oliver Berghof, *The Etymologies of Isidore of Seville* (Cambridge: 2006), 3.

2 Jacques Elfassi's chapter in this volume explores the role of etymologies in Isidore's writings, while a number of other chapters explore the later dissemination and reuse of the *Etymologiae*, or sub-sections of the text (e.g. those by José Carracedo, Faith Wallis, Immo Warntjes, Sinéad O'Sullivan, and Winston Black).

3 Isidore's grammatical writings are examined in José Carracedo's chapter in this volume, while his theological and pastoral works are the subject of chapters by Thomas O'Loughlin, Céline Martin, and Pedro Castillo Maldonado.

4 The historical context of Isidore's life is discussed in detail in this volume in the chapter by Santiago Castellanos.

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kingdom of Spain, he was not himself a Goth, but a Hispano-Roman.[5] His family appear to have hailed from Cartagena on the Levantine coast of south-east Spain, but fled from the town in 554 during the Byzantine invasion of the Iberian Peninsula. His father, Severianus, is sometimes asserted to have been the *count* of Cartagena, but Isidore only says that he was a native of the city (or perhaps of the province of *Carthaginiensis*). We have no definitive evidence for the date of Isidore's birth. He was consecrated a bishop in 600/601. The minimum age to be so ordained in the Visigothic Church was thirty.[6] This gives us a *terminus ante quem* of 570 for his birth; we have no firm data to refine this date further. Most commentators have seen the flight of the family as one from Byzantine occupation or perhaps expulsion by the Byzantines. However, Fontaine and Cazier have argued to the contrary that it was a punitive act by the Visigothic authorities to punish Severianus for supporting the Byzantines.[7] Regardless of his father's sympathies, Isidore shows a deep attachment to the Peninsula, as is seen in his *Laus Hispaniae*, "In praise of Spain," which prefaces the second redaction of his *History of the Goths, Sueves and Vandals* and which begins in the following manner:

> Of all the lands from the west to the Indies, you, Spain, O sacred and always fortunate mother of princes and peoples, are the most beautiful. Rightly are you now the queen of all provinces, from which not only the west but also the east borrows its shining lights. You are the pride and the ornament of the world, the most illustrious part of the earth, in which the Getic people are gloriously prolific, rejoicing much and flourishing greatly.[8]

It is hardly surprising, therefore, that Isidore has been described as "el primer español."[9]

5 Roger Collins, *Visigothic Spain 409–711* (Oxford: 2004), 154, has suggested that, given that both Leander and Isidore had names more common in the eastern Mediterranean, their family may have an East Roman origin, but this has not been generally accepted.

6 Council of Agde (506), canon 27; Council of Arles (526), canon 17. This age was reaffirmed by canon 19 of the Fourth Council of Toledo, over which Isidore presided in 633.

7 Jacques Fontaine and Pierre Cazier, "Qui a chassé de Carthaginoise Sévérianus et les siens? Observations sur l'histoire familiale d'Isidore de Séville," in *Estudios en Homenaje a Don Claudio Sánchez Albornoz en sus 90 años*, vol. 1 (Madrid: 1983), 349–400.

8 Isidore, *Historia Gothorum*, *Laus Spaniae*, trans. Kenneth B. Wolf, *Conquerors and Chroniclers of Early Medieval Spain* (Liverpool: 1990), 79.

9 See José Luis Romero, "San Isidoro de Sevilla. Su pensamiento histórico político y sus relaciones con la historia visigoda," *Cuadernos de Historia de España* 8 (1947), 5–71.

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The young Isidore was brought up by his elder brother, Leander, who was to become the Trinitarian bishop of Seville in the 570s.[10] Leander's appointment was the first in a sequence of ecclesiastical offices to be occupied by the family. Not only did Isidore later succeed Leander, but another brother, Fulgentius, was to become bishop of nearby Ecija, and his sister Florentina was a nun and possibly became an abbess (perhaps of the convent S. Maria de Valle near Ecija). As is explored in the chapter on Leander's influence on Isidore by Purificación Ubric Rabaneda, Leander was highly active in the politics of the realm and was involved in prince Hermenegild's abortive uprising against his father, the Visigothic King Leovigild (r. 568–86) in 579, as well as in Hermenegild's subsequent conversion from Arianism to Trinitarianism in 582. As a result of these activities, Leander was either exiled from Spain to Byzantium or went there as an envoy for Hermenegild. In any case, while in the East he may have petitioned the Eastern emperor to support Hermenegild's uprising and certainly met and befriended the future Pope Gregory the Great (d. 604).[11] Gregory was later to dedicate his *Moralia in Job* to Leander. After his return to the Peninsula, Leander was instrumental in persuading Leovigild's younger son and successor, Reccared (r. 586–601), both to convert to Trinitarianism personally in 587 and then to enforce the Nicene Creed in his kingdom at the Third Council of Toledo in 589.

On Leander's death in 600/601, Isidore succeeded him as bishop of Seville. His incumbency was a long one: he was to preside over the see until his death on 4 April 636. Like his brother, he was politically active and his writings reveal a belief that the church ought to play the leading role in the politics of the kingdom.[12] This is seen most clearly in the *acta* of the Fourth Council of Toledo, over which he presided in 633.[13] He was, however, to be disappointed. While the kingdom was once regarded by scholars as a virtual theocracy (in part because of Isidore's writings), more recent scholarship generally accepts that secular power in the kingdom dominated its ecclesiastical hierarchy.[14] Seville's physical distance from the royal court in Toledo may in itself have limited the

10 For a detailed discussion of Leander and his influence on Isidore, see Purificación Ubric Rabaneda's chapter in this volume.

11 Jamie Wood, "A Family Affair: Leander, Isidore and the Legacy of Gregory the Great in Spain," in *Isidore of Seville and his Reception in the Early Middle Ages: Transmitting and Transforming Knowledge*, eds. Andrew Fear and Jamie Wood (Amsterdam: 2016), 31–56.

12 Rachel L. Stocking, *Bishops, Councils and Consensus in the Visigothic Kingdom, 589–633* (Ann Arbor: 2000).

13 See also Andrew Fear's chapter in this volume.

14 See R. Dykes Shaw, "The Fall of Visigothic Power in Spain," *English Historical Review* 21 (1906), 209–28, for a classic exposition of the "theocratic" point of view.

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degree of influence that Isidore could exercise on the political life of the kingdom.[15]

Isidore's episcopate coincided with the reigns of no fewer than nine kings. His appointment to his see came at the very end of Reccared's reign, and perhaps his brother's close friendship with the king aided his appointment. Reccared was, however, to die within the year, and his young son, Liuva II (r. 601–03), was soon ousted by Witteric (r. 603–10). This was potentially a dangerous time for Isidore, who clearly disliked Witteric, telling us that the latter did "very many forbidden things" (*plurima inlicita*) during his reign.[16] It does not seem, however, that an attempt to oust Isidore was among Witteric's sins. The king was assassinated in 610 and replaced briefly by Gundemar. On the latter's death in 611, Sisebut became king. King Sisebut (r. 612–21) seems to have been something of an intellectual and also had firm views on the church and Christian faith. His relationship with Isidore was complex and has been interpreted as anything from close friendship to ill-disguised hostility.[17] Certainly, the king's poem on eclipses is dedicated to Isidore and Isidore's *De Natura Rerum*, and the initial version of Isidore's *Etymologies* reciprocates the compliment, if compliment it be rather than evidence of rivalry. Sisebut's enthusiastic wish forcibly to convert the Jews in his kingdom drew a rebuke from Isidore, the leading bishop at the Fourth Council of Toledo, which decreed in 633 that such forced conversion should be prohibited.[18] After Sisebut's death, the royal policy towards the Jews is described by Isidore as "not in accord with reason" (*non secundum scientiam*).[19] Sisebut was succeeded on his death in 621 by his young son Reccared II. Isidore comments cagily that Reccared reigned for a few days, but in fact it is likely that he occupied the throne for at least a year.[20] Reccared was replaced by Suinthila (r. 621–31), upon whom Isidore lavishes

15 Collins, *Visigothic Spain*, 75–76. For an assertion of greater influence, see Jacques Fontaine, *Isidore de Séville: genèse et originalité de la culture hispanique au temps des Wisigoths* (Turnhout: 2000), 129–43 (chapter title: "Le 'tuteur' du royaume de Tolède").

16 Isidore, *Historia Gothorum* 58. Isidore was not alone in his dislike; Count Bulgar describes Witteric as an "impious tyrant" (*impius tirannus*), *Epistolae Wisigothicae* 13.39.

17 For friendship, see Fontaine, *Isidore de Séville: genèse et originalité*, 123. For hostility, see Calvin B. Kendall and Faith Wallis, *Isidore of Seville: On the Nature of Things* (Liverpool: 2016), 52. On Sisebut more generally, see: Yitzhak Hen, "A Visigothic king in search of an identity—*Sisebutus Gothorum gloriossisimus princeps*," in *Ego Trouble: Authors and Their Identities in the Early Middle Ages*, eds. Richard Corradini, Matthew Gillis, Rosamond McKitterick, and Irene van Renswoude (Vienna: 2010), 89–99.

18 *Fourth Council of Toledo* 57: "De Iudeis autem praecepit sancta synodus, nemini deinceps ad credendum vim inferre."

19 Isidore, *Historia Gothorum* 126.

20 *Chronica Regum Visigothorum* 459.

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fulsome praise in the second version of his *Historia Gothorum*.[21] Whether he was forced to do so by the new monarch and equally compelled to obscure the circumstances surrounding the demise of Reccared II, or was an enthusiastic partisan of Suinthila cannot be resolved. In 631 an uprising led by Sisenand (r. 631–36) brought about the demise of Suinthila, who in turn was succeeded by Chintila (r. 636–40) just before Isidore's death.[22] We have no evidence for Isidore's views of the latter two kings, though Collins sees the reign of Sisenand as possibly the apogee of Isidore's political influence.[23]

Whatever his impact on contemporary politics, Isidore's effect on intellectual life cannot be doubted.[24] His written output was prodigious, encompassing the fields of theology, history, grammar, science, and church governance, to mention only the most significant fields in which he made an impact.[25] A firm believer in the power of education, he was to declare that "Ignorance is the mother of error, ignorance is the nurse of sins [...] for the uneducated man is easily deceived. The fool swiftly falls into vice."[26] He also wished to ground doctrine in concrete knowledge: "All wisdom is derived from knowledge or conjecture. A view based on knowledge is better than that based on conjecture, for the former is true, while the latter doubtful."[27] Much of his work can be seen as an attempt to educate his flock, especially the clergy, whose lack of learning seems to have been a consistent concern for the bishops of the 7th century.[28] While admiring learning, he was nevertheless selective about the past and remained always deeply suspicious of the pagan aspects of classical culture and what he saw as their potentially corrupting influence. Thus, he was

21 Isidore, *Historia Gothorum* 64.

22 On the internal politics of the Visigothic kingdom in this period, see Luis A. García Moreno, "La oposición a Suintila: Iglesia, Monarquía y Nobleza en el Reino Visigodo," in *Estudios de historia medieval: homenaje a Luis Suárez*, eds. Vicente Ángel Álvarez Palenzuela, Miguel Ángel Ladero Quesada, and Julio Valdeón Baruque (Valladolid: 1991), 12–24.

23 Collins, *Visigothic Spain*, 79. If correct, Isidore's power may have stemmed as much from the new king's weakness as his friendship.

24 The cultural context in which Isidore operated is examined by Graham Barrett in the second chapter in this volume.

25 These topics are explored in detail in the chapters by Thomas O'Loughlin, Jamie Wood, Jacques Elfassi, José Carracedo, Faith Wallis, Céline Martin, and Pedro Castillo Maldonado elsewhere in this volume.

26 Isidore, *Synonyma* 2.65: "Ignorantia mater errorum est, ignorantia vitiorum nutrix ... indoctus enim facile decipitur. Stultus in vitia cito dilabitur."

27 Isidore, *Sententiae* 2.1.8: "Omnis sapientia ex scientia et opinatione consistit. Melior est autem ex scientia veniens quam ex opinatione sententia. Nam illa vera est, ista dubia."

28 See the chapters by Céline Martin, and Pedro Castillo Maldonado in this volume.

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eager to prohibit the reading of ancient poetry.[29] Isidore certainly wished to preserve the past, but he was equally determined to recast it and make it fit for a new Christian future.[30] Isidore's concern with protecting the boundary of the Christian community from the potential dangers of outside religious influence—including illicit knowledge—is evidenced in his anti-Jewish writings, works that have been the subject of consistent scholarly debate and which form of the focus of Raúl González Salinero's chapter in the present volume.[31]

Isidore's library and use of sources have been an increasing focus of research in recent decades as scholars have sought to apply digital techniques to decoding his corpus. In the process they have identified many previously unrecognised sources and gained valuable insights into his working practices.[32] The *Renotatio librorum domini Isidori* is a source that has often been mined for information about Isidore's writings and his contemporary reputation. This short biographical piece was written by his young contemporary Braulio of Zaragoza, and was intended to be appended to Isidore's own *De viris illustribus*.[33] A translation of the *Renotatio* follows.[34]

---

29 Isidore, *Sententiae* 3.13.1: "Thus a Christian is forbidden to read the compositions of their poets because by the pleasure of their inane fables they provoke the mind to incitements of lust. For a man burns not merely from offering incense to demons, but also by too willingly plucking at their words" ("Ideo prohibetur christianus figmenta legere poetarum quia per oblectamenta inanium fabularum mentem excitant ad incentiua libidinum. Non enim solum tura offerendo daemonibus immolatur, sed etiam eorum dicta libentius capiendo").

30 On this topic recently, see, for example, the chapters in Fear and Wood, *Isidore of Seville and his Reception*.

31 Bat-Sheva Albert, "Isidore of Seville: His attitude towards Judaism and His impact on Early Medieval Canon Law," *The Jewish Quarterly Review* 80 (1990), 207–20; Juan Gil, "Judíos y cristianos en la Hispania del s. VII," *Hispania Sacra* 30 (1977), 9–110; Bernard S. Bachrach, "A Reassessment of Visigothic Jewish Policy, 589–711," *American Historical Review* 78 (1973), 11–34.

32 Jacques Elfassi, "Connaître la bibliothéque pour Connaître les sources: Isidore de Séville," *Antiquité Tardive* 23 (2015), 59–66, offers important methodological reflections. For recent work on Isidore's sources, see Jacques Elfassi, "Isidore de Séville connaissait-il les *Fables* d'Hygin?" *Eruditio Antiqua* 10 (2018), 73–103; David Lloyd Dusenbury, "*Ait enim Lucretius*: An affirmation of the Epicurean concept of time in Isidore," *Antiquité Tardive* 25 (2017), 341–51.

33 On the earliest reception of Isidore's works within the Iberian Peninsula, see Mark Lewis Tizzoni's chapter in this volume.

34 The translation has been made from the text found in José Carlos Martín, ed., *La "Renotatio librorum domini Isidori" de Braulio de Zaragoza (†651)* (Logroño: 2002). See also the more recent edition by José Carlos Martín, *Scripta de uita Isidori Hispalensis episcopi*, CCSL 113B (Turnhout: 2006), 199–207.

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Isidore, an outstanding man, bishop of the church of Seville, the successor and brother of bishop Leander, began his distinguished career in the reigns of the emperor Maurice and king Reccared. In him antiquity reclaimed something of its own, or rather our times saw the knowledge of antiquity reflected in him. He was a man trained in every form of speech so that he could fit his style of address to the uneducated and educated alike. In this way, adapting to the needs of the occasion, he shone with outstanding eloquence.[35] A careful reader could easily learn how great his wisdom was from his diverse studies and the monographs which he wrote. Out of these I have made this list of those which have come to my notice:

He wrote two books of *Differentiae* in which he distinguished by subtle discrimination the meanings of words that had become blurred through their usage.

He wrote one book of *Proemia* in which he marked out with concise annotation what each book of the Holy Scriptures contains.

He wrote one book on the *Birth and Death of the Fathers* in which he noted with concise comments their deeds, rank, death, and the place of their burial.[36]

For his brother, bishop Fulgentius, he wrote two books of *Church Offices* in which, not neglecting the authority of our forefathers, he interpreted them, and explained the origin of those offices and why everything is so enacted in the Church of God.

He wrote two books of *Synonyms* which he produced, using reason as his exhortation, for the consolation of the soul and the hope of the pardon we shall obtain.

He dedicated to King Sisebut one book *Concerning the Nature of Things* in which, using equally the researches of the doctors of the Church and those of the philosophers, he clarified certain obscure matters of the material world.

35 A skill recommended by Gregory the Great, *Moralia* 30.3.12. Isidore's eloquence is also praised by Ildefonsus of Toledo, *De viris illustribus* 8.

36 "Concision" here and elsewhere in Braulio's account demonstrates that Isidore's writings possessed the prized virtue of *brevitas*, see E.R. Curtius, *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages* (Princeton: 1983), Chapter 13: "Brevity as an ideal of style." On brevity in Isidore's writings, especially the historical works, see: Jamie Wood, "*Brevitas* in the historical writings of Isidore of Seville," in *Early Medieval Spain—A Symposium*, eds. Alan Deyermond and Martin J. Ryan (London: 2010), 37–53.

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He wrote one book *On Numbers* in which he deals with part of the science of arithmetic on account of the numbers placed in the Church's writings.
He wrote one book *On the Names of the Law and Evangelists* in which he showed the mystic meaning of those recorded there.[37]
He wrote one book *On Heresies* in which, following the example of our forefathers, he gathered together this diffuse material as concisely as he was able.
He wrote three books of *Sententiae* which he adorned with flowers plucked from the books of *Moralia* of Pope Gregory.
He wrote one book of *Chronicles* compiled with great concision starting from the beginning of the world and running down to his own time.
At the request of his sister Florentina, a professed virgin, he wrote two books *Against the Jews* in which he gives proofs from the testimony of the Law and of the Prophets concerning everything which the Catholic faith believes.
He wrote one book *On Famous Men* to which we are appending these notes here.
He wrote in one book *A Monastic Rule* which he edited in a most appropriate fashion for use in his country and the souls of the infirm.
He wrote one book on *The Origin of the Goths and the Kingdom of the Sueves, including the History of the Vandals.*
He wrote two books of *Controversies.* He who reads them will recognise a wealth of material taken from the works of old.
The volume of the *Etymologies* which is of very great length was divided by him by subjects and not into books. This work which he wrote at my request, but left unfinished, I have divided into twenty books.[38] Whoever thoughtfully and often reads through this work which contains every branch of philosophy will, and rightly so, no longer be devoid of understanding in matters both human and divine. In this work, which overflows with the eloquence of diverse arts, he gathered together and summarised almost everything that a man ought to know. There are many other small

37 "Law" here means the Pentateuch, or perhaps more generally the Old Testament, Isidore, *Etymologiae* 6.1.3-5.

38 Martín, *Scripta*, 167–68. It has also been suggested that Isidore intended a division into 22 or 24 books, see John Henderson, *The Medieval World of Isidore of Seville: Truth from Words* (Cambridge: 2007), 20. José Carlos Martín, *Escritos medievales en honor del obispo Isidoro de Sevilla*, Corpus Christianorum in Translation 29 (Turnhout: 2017), 85, now thinks now that Braulio made the division into 15 books.

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> works (*opuscula*) by him and material (*instrumenta*) which greatly adorns the Church of God.
>
> I believe that after so many years of decline in Spain, God, as if he had set before us a certain goal, raised this man up in these latest times so that we should not altogether grow old in our boorishness. He can deservedly have this philosophical sentiment applied to him by us: "Your books, he said, have, so to speak, brought us home by giving us something that allowed us to know who and where we were, as we strayed through our own city, wandering like strangers. It was you who revealed to us the times of our country, the divisions of time, the laws of the Church and of the priests, public and private conduct, the names of kingdoms, regions, and towns, the names of everything human and divine, their types, their nature, and their cause."[39]
>
> With what a flood of eloquence and with how many lances forged from the sacred Scriptures or the works of the Fathers he routed the heresy of the Acephalites is attested by the acts of the Councils held before him at Seville where he confronted Gregory the leader of the aforementioned heresy and vindicated the truth of the Catholic Faith.[40]
>
> He died during the reigns of the Emperor Heraclius and that most Christian king Chintila, both excelling all in his righteous learning and in the generosity of his charitable works.

All the books listed by Braulio are still extant. It has recently been argued that *On heresies* (*De haeresibus*), discovered by Ángel Custodio Vega in 1936 and long considered inauthentic, may be of Isidorian authorship after all.[41] Braulio implies that Isidore wrote more than he himself lists, but his catalogue has become accepted as including all of Isidore's major works. Given Isidore's fame, many pseudo-epigraphical works are also to be found.[42] It has also generally been assumed that Braulio lists Isidore's works in chronological order of

39 Cicero, *Academia*, 1.3, originally addressed to the Roman polymath Varro.

40 The Second Council of Seville, held on 13 November 619. For more on this episode, see: L.S.B. MacCoull, "Isidore and the *Akephaloi*," *Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies* 39 (1998), 169–78.

41 Á.C. Vega, ed., *S. Isidori Hispalensis episcopi De haeresibus liber* (El Escorial: 1940). On its authenticity, see L. Pirovano, "Il *De Haeresibus* attribuito a Isidoro e il *Liber glossarum*: alcune considerazioni," *Dossiers d'HEL* 10 (2016), 199–207, and José Carlos Martín, "El tratado 'De haeresibus' (CPL—1201) atribuido a Isidoro de Sevilla: notas en favor de una autoría discutida y primera edición completa del texto," *Filologia mediolatina* 25 (2018), 139–74.

42 See R.E. McNally, "Isidorian Pseudepigraphica in the Early Middle Ages," in *Isidoriana: Colección de éstudios sobre Isidoro de Sevilla*, ed. Manuel C. Díaz y Díaz (León: 1961), 305–16.

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production.[43] However, a later, shorter list of works composed by Ildefonsus of Toledo does not retain Braulio's order, and so there can be no certainty in this respect.[44] Among Isidore's "opuscula" may be the *Versus Isidori*, a collection of short poems which were said to have been painted at the top of Isidore's bookcases in Seville.[45] Among the "instrumenta" is possibly the initial edition of the so-called *Collectio Canonica Hispana*, a compilation of the *acta* of the ecumenical church councils, some local councils celebrated in Africa and Gaul, and a large number of Iberian councils, concluding with the Fourth Council of Toledo.[46]

Within a few decades of his death, certain of Isidore's works were disseminated rapidly, and knowledge of his exploits was spread throughout Spain and beyond, a topic that is explored in the chapters by Mark Lewis Tizzoni (on the Iberian Peninsula) and Martin J. Ryan (on Ireland and Anglo-Saxon England, mainly). Early hagiographical accounts by Braulio of Zaragoza, Redemptus of Seville, and Ildefonsus of Toledo point towards a concerted effort to channel memories of Isidore shortly after his death, as do positive references in church council records.[47] Citation of Isidore's writings began early in Spain too, with writers such as Braulio, Ildefonsus, and Julian and Eugenius II of Toledo redeploying resources produced by Isidore in their theological, polemical, pastoral, and poetic works across the mid and late 7th century, and no doubt assisting in their rapid transmission beyond the Peninsula. Scholars in Ireland were amongst the earliest and most enthusiastic audiences for his works in the early Middle Ages. In "Isidore Amongst the Islands: Reception and Use of Isidore of Seville in Britain and Ireland in the Early Middle Ages," Martin J. Ryan demonstrates the wide extent of Isidore's influence in England, Ireland and elsewhere

43 José Antonio de Aldama, "Indicaciones sobre la cronología de las obras de S. Isidoro," in *Miscellanea Isidoriana. Homenaje a San Isidoro de Sevilla en el XIII centenario de su muerte 636—4 de abril 1936* (Rome: 1936), 57–89.

44 This topic is discussed in the chapter by Graham Barrett in the present volume. See also Martín, *La "Renotatio librorum domini Isidori,"* 74–84, and Michael Kelly, "The Politics of History-Writing: Problematizing the Historiographical Origins of Isidore of Seville in Early Medieval Hispania," in Fear and Wood, *Isidore of Seville and his Reception*, 95–98.

45 J.M. Sánchez Martín, ed., *Isidori Hispalensis Versus*, CCSL 113A (Turnhout: 2000). For a detailed discussion of possible minor works, see Manuel C. Díaz y Díaz, "Introducción general," in *San Isidoro de Sevilla, Etimologías*, José Oroz Reta and Manuel A. Marcos Casquero, trans., 2 vols (Madrid: 1982–1983), 1:152–58.

46 See G. Martínez Díez, *La colección canónica Hispana* (Madrid: 1966). On Isidore's active moulding of the records of the councils to meet the exigencies of contemporary ecclesiastical politics, see Rachel L. Stocking, "Martianus, Aventius, and Isidore: Provincial Councils in Seventh-Century Spain," *Early Medieval Europe* 6 (1997), 169–88.

47 For more on this, see Kelly, "The Politics of History-Writing."

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in the Atlantic archipelago. He analyses key texts and manuscripts, exploring Isidore's impact on leading insular scholars, such as Aldhelm, Hadrian, Theodore of Canterbury, Bede, and numerous anonymous and pseudonymous Irish authors.

Sinéad O'Sullivan's chapter on Isidore's reception and use in Carolingian and Ottonian Europe develops our understanding of the practical utility of many of Isidore's works in monastic libraries of the 9th, 10th, and 11th centuries. Focussing in particular on the function of the *Etymologiae* as a reference work, O'Sullivan examines the use of the text in Prudentius, Martianus, and Virgil glosses, and explores the importance of encyclopaedism and etymology, which lies at the heart of Isidore's *Etymologiae*, within early medieval glossing and textual culture. In particular, the chapter examines one of Isidore's most important sources, Servius, documenting the continuing connection between Isidore and Servius in Virgil manuscripts of the 9th and 10th centuries.

Winston Black examines the influence of Isidore on scholastic Europe, the first English-language study of the later medieval reception of Isidore. Black challenges a prevailing assumption that Isidore and his works, especially the *Etymologiae*, were rejected in the High Middle Ages, by providing a detailed survey of the "scholastic" reception of Isidore, illustrated with numerous examples from scholastic encyclopaedias, as well as from specific high and later medieval manuscripts. He demonstrates that the *Etymologiae* remained consistently popular throughout the Middle Ages, but other works, like *De Natura Rerum*, waned in popularity after the 12th century, while some, like the *Synonyma*, found exceptional favour toward the end of the Middle Ages. Black shows that "two different Isidores become apparent in any university or monastic libraries of the later Middle Ages: first, a Master Isidore of the *Etymologiae*, father of encyclopedias, and a revered, albeit antiquated and insufficient, scholar on the natures of things; and second, Saint Isidore of the *Sententiae* and *Synonyma*, a teacher of moral and theological truths and a guide to exploring the mystical significances of words and things" (p. 597).

The final two chapters in our volume explore how Isidore fared in the early modern period, in Europe, especially Spain, and the New World. This was the period that saw the production of the first properly critical edition of Isidore's complete works in 1598, a subject touched on in Jeremy Lawrance's chapter. Lawrance shows how Renaissance humanism was not kind to Isidore, and as a result his authority as an encyclopaedist declined sharply. At the same time, the rise of "national" monarchies and the confessional conflicts of the Reformation and Counter-Reformation lent the question of Isidore's sanctity and place within Catholic *historia sacra* a new urgency, and he became susceptible to appropriation as a contentious symbol of Spanish nationhood. In the final

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chapter of this volume, Amy Fuller takes us beyond Europe and seeks to unravel whether—and how—Isidore's works were received in the New World. Fuller concludes that Isidore's encyclopaedic efforts may have been an inspiration (if not a direct source) for the Catholic scholars who were entrusted with evangelising, recording and sometimes seeking to understand the indigenous populations with which the Spanish came into contact.

The body of scholarly work on Isidore is of monumental proportions, evidenced by the extensive efforts of Jocelyn N. Hillgarth, Alberto Ferreiro, and Jacques Elfassi to keep track of an ever-expanding bibliography.[48] The past two decades have witnessed something of a flourishing of studies of Isidore in English that goes some way towards matching the volume of Isidorian scholarship in Spanish and French (in particular) in the second half of the 20th century, inspired primarily by the seminal work of Jacques Fontaine on classical influences on Isidore.[49] Scholars have sought to understand the construction of the *Etymologiae*, his intellectual output more broadly, and the role of history and geography in his view of the world in which he lived.[50] Particularly important

48 J.N. Hillgarth, "The position of Isidorian studies: a critical review of the literature 1936–1975," *Studi medievali*, 3rd ser. 24 (1983), 817–905; J.N. Hillgarth, "Isidorian Studies, 1976–1985," *Studi medievali*, 3rd ser. 31 (1990), 925–76. A. Ferreiro, *The Visigoths in Gaul and Spain, A.D. 418–711: A Bibliography* (Leiden: 1988), 327–409; *The Visigoths in Gaul and Iberia: a supplemental bibliography, 1984–2003* (Leiden: 2006), 299–409; *The Visigoths in Gaul and Iberia* (*Update*)*: A Supplemental Bibliography, 2004–2006* (Leiden: 2008), 113–44; *The Visigoths in Gaul and Iberia* (*update*)*: a supplemental bibliography, 2007–2009* (Leiden: 2011), 135–74; *The Visigoths in Gaul and Iberia* (*update*)*: a supplemental bibliography, 2010–2012* (Leiden: 2014), 133–68. Jacques Elfassi, "Chronique isidorienne (2008–2009)," *Eruditio Antiqua* 2 (2010), 165–87; "Chronique isidorienne II (2010–2011)," *Eruditio Antiqua* 4 (2012), 19–63; "Chronique isidorienne III (2012–2013)," *Eruditio Antiqua* 6 (2014), 39–87; "Chronique isidorienne IV (2014–2015)," *Eruditio Antiqua* 8 (2016), 1–50; "Chronique isidorienne IV (2016–2017)," *Eruditio Antiqua* (2018), 239–93.

49 Jacques Fontaine, *Isidore de Séville et la culture classique dans L'espagne wisigothique*, 3 vols, 2nd ed. (Paris: 1983). Important edited collections include: *Miscellanea Isidoriana* (Rome: 1936); Díaz y Díaz, *Isidoriana*. See also: Hans-Joachim Diesner, *Isidor von Sevilla und seine Zeit* (Stuttgart: 1973); Marc Reydellet, *La royauté dans la littérature latine de Sidoine Apollinaire à Isidore de Séville* (Rome: 1981); Díaz y Díaz, "Introducción," 1–257; Pierre Cazier, *Isidore de Séville et la Naissance de l'Espagne Catholique* (Paris: 1994); Justo Pérez de Urbel, *San Isidoro de Sevilla: Su vida, su obra y su tiempo*, 3rd ed. (Barcelona: 1936; repr. León: 1995); Fontaine, *Isidore de Séville: genèse et originalité*; Marcelo Martínez Pastor, *Herejías y Sectas en la Iglesia Antigua. El octavo libro de las Etimologías de Isidoro de Sevilla y sus Fuentes* (Madrid: 2000); Bernard Ribémont, *Les origines des encyclopédies medievales. D'Isidore de Séville aux Carolingiens* (Paris: 2001).

50 Henderson, *The Medieval World of Isidore of Seville*; Barney et al., *The Etymologies of Isidore of Seville*; A.H. Merrills, *History and Geography in Late Antiquity* (Cambridge: 2005); Jamie Wood, *The Politics of Identity in Visigothic Spain: Religion and Power in the Histories*

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has been the 2015 issue of the journal *Antiquité Tardive*, entitled "Isidore de Séville et son temps," and a tranche of recent publications that have revealed the depth of Isidore's impact in previously unexamined arenas, especially in relation to the transmission of knowledge in the Middle Ages.[51]

The present volume is divided into three parts. Following this synoptic introduction, three chapters address different aspects of the context in which Isidore operated. Santiago Castellanos and Graham Barrett consider Isidore's historical and cultural contexts, respectively, situating the subject of the volume in relation to his contemporaries within Hispania. Purificación Ubric Rabaneda then addresses the important role played by Leander of Seville in the ecclesiastical politics of the late 6th century and in the formation of Isidore, his younger brother. The second part examines Isidore's most important works within the broad categories of theology (Thomas O'Loughlin), history (Jamie Wood), science (Faith Wallis), grammar (José Carracedo Fraga) and etymology (Jacques Elfassi). A common feature of these chapters is the ways in which they demonstrate that Isidore was able to make creative use of the writings of his predecessors and experimented with genre boundaries across a number of different fields of practical and theoretical knowledge. Subsequent chapters take a series of cross-sectional paths through Isidore's writings, relating them to the changing historical contexts in which he was working, considering themes such as pastoral care and church governance (Céline Martin), monasticism and education (Pedro Castillo Maldonado), kingship and law (Andrew Fear), and dealing with "others," such as heretics and Jews (Raúl González Salinero). A final group of chapters in Part 3 explores Isidore's legacy, from his immediate reception in Spain in the 7th century (Mark Lewis Tizzoni) to the transformation of his legacy in the high and late medieval (Winston Black) and early modern (Jeremy Lawrance) periods. These chapters range widely in terms of geography too, from Britain and Ireland (Martin J. Ryan), across

of Isidore of Seville (Leiden: 2012); Benjamín Hernández Blázquez, *San Isidoro de Sevilla: el erudito* (Madrid: 2014).

51 Claudia Di Sciacca, *Finding the Right Words: Isidore's* Synonyma *in Anglo-Saxon England* (Toronto: 2008); Immo Warntjes, *The Munich Computus: Text and Translation. Irish Computistics between Isidore of Seville and the Venerable Bede and its reception in Carolingian times* (Stuttgart: 2010); Mary Franklin-Brown, *Reading the World: Encyclopedic Writing in the Scholastic Age* (Chicago: 2012); Emma Falque, "En torno a la figura de Isidoro en el s. XIII: Lucas de Tuy," *Antiquité Tardive* 23 (2015), 249–60; Luis Fernández Gallardo, "Los Godos en la memoria histórica castellana del medievo," *Antiquité Tardive* 23 (2015), 261–68; Fear and Wood, *Isidore of Seville and his Reception*; José Sánchez Herrero, ed., *San Isidoro de Sevilla en Sevilla* (Seville: 2018). José Cubero Garrote, *San Isidoro: sabio en el siglo VII, santo en el siglo XII* (Madrid: 2018), is intended for a popular audience and offers an overview of Isidore and his context, as well as his later reception.

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western Europe (Immo Warntjes and Sinéad O'Sullivan) and even to the New World (Amy Fuller), demonstrating not only the creative ways in which the knowledge that Isidore had generated could be moulded to new uses in new contexts, but also how Isidore's legacy was challenged, reconfigured, and reaffirmed in the process.

As the papers in this volume demonstrate, the field of Isidorian studies remains a vibrant one. In addition to continuing philological endeavours to establish editions of key works by Isidore, there is a growing—and related—interest in the reception and transmission of his writings throughout the Latin-speaking medieval world, from the cultural heartlands of the Carolingian Empire to more peripheral regions. Another key trend in scholarship is to attempt to disentangle the sources that Isidore had at his disposal and his working practices when using them, especially in relation to figures who are often thought to have had a formative impact on him: Augustine of Hippo, Gregory the Great, and Leander of Seville, his brother. Further studies have sought to situate Isidore within the context of the contemporary Iberian episcopate, on which he is often viewed as having a shaping influence. Less sustained effort has been made to contextualise Isidore—and the Iberian episcopate more generally—within the post-Roman cultural, political and social landscape. Important recent work on the material culture of late antique Iberia, as well as the continued interaction of aristocracies and state powers across the period, has also yet to be related to Isidore, his peers, and his context.[52] While much has been accomplished to understand Isidore and his world, it is clear that much remains to be done.

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CHAPTER 2

Isidore of Seville: Historical Contexts

Santiago Castellanos

"Do not forget our little brother Isidore."[1,2] This was the wish expressed by Leander, the bishop of Seville, to his sister Florentina as she made her profession in a nunnery. Afterwards the phrase came to form part of a work dealing with the moral and ascetic training of nuns, which Leander composed specifically for Florentina. The "little brother" was Isidore of Seville. This chapter aims to place Isidore in his historical context by looking at the way he fulfilled his role as a bishop, as the author of a series of literary works, and via his social, political, and religious legacy. It must be conceded, as in previous treatments of Isidore, that in reality we know very little about his personality or the history of his life. Nevertheless, it is possible to engage with his thought and examine the influence that he exercised during his episcopate (*c*.600/602–636).

Isidore was the bishop of an important city in Hispania, Hispalis (the modern Seville), in the first third of the 7th century A.D. This was a period when the Catholic Church was beginning to enjoy a period of political hegemony, which had begun in the previous generation when the *regnum Gothorum* under Reccared (586–601) converted from Arianism to Catholicism. This is not to say that prior to this, during the late Roman and earlier Visigothic periods, Catholic bishops had not exercised important power and influence in Hispania, but this new alliance with the monarchy gave the clergy a whole new level of authority, and Isidore was to reap the benefits of this new dispensation.

1 Leander of Seville and the Formation of Isidore's World

In the same paragraph of the *De institutione uirginum*, Leander remarks to his sister Florentina that she had left the region where she was born in her early youth, "the land where they expelled its citizens, and settled foreigners to the

1 This paper is part of the research project HAR2013-47889-C3-3-P, funded by the Economy Office of the Spanish government. I am very grateful to Andrew Fear for translating the text into English.

2 Leander, *De institutione uirginum* 31: "nec iunioris fratris oblivis caris." For more on these topics, see the chapters by Purificación Ubric Rabaneda and Pedro Castillo Maldonado in the present volume.

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loss of its honour, lost its fertility." Where was this region? We are given the answer by Isidore, who in his short biographical sketch of Leander makes it clear that the family hailed from *Carthaginiensis* and also reveals that their father was called Severianus.[3] The foreigners to whom Leander refers as having occupied *Carthaginiensis* were none other than the imperial Roman/Byzantine troops who took control of the south-east of Hispania during the civil war between Agila and Athanagild, in the middle of the 6th century, a war which came to an end after the triumph of the latter, who then became the rulers of the *regnum Gothorum*. The state of our knowledge does not allow us to ascertain the first origins of the family: Leander says that Florentina was born in *Carthaginiensis*, but this does not necessarily mean that this was also true of Severianus. Indeed, some scholars have suggested that the family's origins lay in Africa. However, upon careful assessment of the available evidence it is impossible to make any statement with certainty on this matter. The reference to *Carthaginiensis* obscures any firm clue about the family's origins.[4] Afterwards Severianus, his wife, Leander, Fulgentius (who was soon to become bishop of Ecija), and Florentina (who took monastic vows) settled in Baetica, the most southerly of the Spanish provinces. It is quite possible that Isidore was born in Seville. Sometime before 579 Leander became bishop of Seville, and it is from this time that we are able to trace his political, religious, and intellectual career more clearly.[5]

3 Leander, *De institutione uirginum* 31, for the reference to the region occupied by foreigners; Isidore, *De viris illustribus* 28: "genitus patre Seueriano, Carthaginiensis prouinciae Hispaniae." See the chapter on Leander by Purificación Ubric Rabaneda elsewhere in this volume for more on this topic.

4 In favour of the family's origin being in Carthaginiensis, Ursicino Domínguez del Val, *Leandro de Sevilla y la lucha contra el arrianismo* (Madrid: 1981), 21. For the possibility of an African origin, Roger Collins, *La España Visigoda, 409–711* (Barcelona: 2005), 159. For the political context in which Leander's family left the region of Cartagena for *Hispalis*, see Luis A. García Moreno, "La Andalucía de San Isidoro," in *Actas II Congreso de Historia de Andalucía*, vol. 3 (Córdoba: 1994), 555–79. For Leander and his influence on Isidore, see Jamie Wood, "A Family Affair. Leander, Isidore and the Legacy of Gregory the Great in Spain," in *Isidore of Seville and his Reception in the Early Middle Ages*, eds. Andrew Fear and Jamie Wood (Amsterdam: 2016), 31–56.

5 It is not certain that his mother's name was Turtur, despite the opinion of Jacques Fontaine, *Isidore de Séville. Genèse et originalité de la culture hispanique au temps des Wisigoths* (Turnhout: 2000), 89–90. She was perhaps abbess of the monastery to which Florentina belonged, José Carlos Martín, "Isidoro de Sevilla: su familia, su vida, su producción escrita," in *Escritos medievales en honor del obispo Isidoro de Sevilla* (Turnhout: 2017), 14–53, esp. 23. It has been suggested that Leander and his family were supporters of the Byzantine occupation. This is the view of Jacques Fontaine and of Pierre Cazier, "Qui a chassé de Carthaginoise Sévérianus et les siens? Observations sur l'histoire familiale d'Isidore de Séville," in *Estudios en Homenaje*

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Isidore tells us that Leander's career flourished during the reign of Reccared, which allows us to suppose that he died before December 601, the date of Reccared's own death. It is impossible to know how precise Isidore wishes to be here, but in any event we can assume that Leander died *c.*600/601, perhaps even in 602.[6] Isidore records some of the works written by his brother, singling out two polemical works against Arianism which have sadly not survived. The first was *Against the Doctrines of the Heretics*, written in two books, and the second was a smaller work titled *Against the claims of the Arians.* Leander wrote other works such as the *De institutione uirginum et de contemptu mundi*, which he dedicated to his sister; letters; and homilies, including the famous homily delivered at the Third Council of Toledo, which will be referred to below.[7] As regards the exile which Isidore mentions Leander endured, this is most likely the journey that Leander made to Constantinople. Like many other events in Leander's life, we know neither the date of this journey nor the date of his return to Hispania. Pope Gregory the Great would later dedicate his *Moralia in Job* to Leander, and its dedicatory preface states that the journey was made "for reasons concerning the faith of the Visigoths." It is clear that Gregory and Leander met and became friends in Constantinople, one being there as the papal envoy to the imperial court and the other there for "reasons of faith." The majority of modern commentators believe that these "reasons" were the war which had broken out in 579 in *Hispania* between King Leovigild and his son. Leovigild was an Arian, while Hermenegild had converted to Catholicism,

a don Claudio Sánchez Albornoz en sus 90 años (Buenos Aires: 1983), 353. However, the disdain expressed towards the "foreigners" who had occupied Carthaginiensis makes this difficult to believe, even though years after leaving this region he was forced to travel Constantinople to negotiate for imperial support for Hermenegild. A more likely scenario is that proposed by Abilio Barbero, "El conflicto de los Tres Capítulos y las iglesias hispánicas en los siglos VI y VII," in *La sociedad visigoda en su entorno histórico* (Madrid: 1992), 136–67, especially 161, using the text sent to Florentina as evidence for Leander's hostility to the empire. There is much to commend the caution of María Adelaida Andrés Sanz, "Leandro de Sevilla," in *La Hispania visigótica y mozárabe. Dos épocas en su literature*, ed. Carmen Codoñer (Salamanca: 2010), 63–68, which has been reiterated with respect to both Leander and Isidore by Isabel Velázquez, *Latine dicitur, vulgo vocant. Aspectos de la lengua escrita y hablada en las obras gramaticales de Isidoro de Sevilla* (Logroño: 2003).

6 Isidore, *De viris illustribus* 28: "Floruit sub Recharedo, uiro religioso ac principe glorioso." For these dates, Jacques Fontaine, *Isidore de Séville. Genèse et originalité*, 91 and 113, and *Isidore de Séville et la culture classique dans l'Espagne Wisigothique*, 2nd ed. (Paris: 1983). For the date of Reccared's death, see *Laterculus regum Visigothorum* 28. The possibility of 602 depends on the *Epitaphium Leandri, Isidori et Florentinae*, Martín, "Isidoro de Sevilla," 37.

7 Isidore, *De viris illustribus* 28: "duos aduersus haereticorum dogmata libros" and "opusculum aduersus instituta arrianorum," the passage makes it clear that these were written "in exilii sui peregrinatione."

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though it is unclear whether he did this prior to the war or during it. Leander's journey to the imperial court under such circumstances suggests that it stemmed from a need to seek imperial support for Hermenegild's cause. Recent investigations into this affair appear to show that the emperor did indeed promise some sort of help but that this came to nothing, as shortly afterwards Leovigild was to pay him a substantial number of *solidi*. If we believe Gregory the Great, Leander returned shortly before the death of Leovigild, which occurred in 586.[8]

According to our sources, Hermenegild's conversion to Catholicism would have taken place around 579. Our Iberian sources make no mention of it. Both John of Biclarum and Isidore describe Hermenegild as a *tyrannus*, or usurper. In his *De viris illustribus* (there is nothing in his *Historia Gothorum*) Isidore notes the role his brother played in the conversion of the Goths, but he makes no mention of Hermenegild, let alone that Leander was implicated in his revolt. John of Biclarum probably made a cryptic reference to Leander's opposition to Leovigild. But he also initiated the practice of presenting Hermenegild as a usurper and thus says nothing about his relationship with Leander. Up to 580 Leovigild was seeking forms of a liturgy that would allow Catholics to convert to Arianism, which suggests that religious issues had become part of the conflict. Outside the Visigothic kingdom Hermenegild was seen as a martyr of the Catholic Church. For this reason Gregory of Tours, for example, champions the Frankish princess Ingundis, Hermenegild's wife, and Gregory the Great praises Leander himself. Ingundis was the daughter of Brunhild and Sigibert, and thus had Visigothic blood, given that Brunhild was the daughter of King Atanagild and Goswintha, who was married to Leovigild. John of Biclarum

8 Gregory the Great, *Moralia in Job*, praefatio. For relations between Gregory and Leander, see Leandro Navarra, "Interventi di Leandro di Siviglia negli sviluppi storice e religiosi della Spagna visigotica: aspetti positivi e limiti," *Studi Storici Religiosi* 4 (1980), 123–34; Josep Vilella, "Gregorio Magno e *Hispania*," *Studia Ephemeridis Augustinianum* 33 (1991), 167–86; Pablo C. Díaz, "Gregorio Magno y el reino visigodo. Un conflicto de poderes," in *Gregorio Magno, l'impero e i "regna,"* ed. Claudio Azzara (Florence: 2008), 59–80; and Wood, "A Family Affair." For the differing possibilities and interpretation of our sources regarding Leander's voyage, see Santiago Castellanos, *Los Godos y la Cruz* (Madrid: 2007); Luis A. García Moreno, *Leovigildo. Unidad y diversidad de un reinado* (Madrid: 2008), 118; and Margarita Vallejo, *Hispania y Bizancio. Una relación desconocida* (Madrid: 2012), 249ff. Leovigild paid the Byzantines 30,000 *solidi*, according to Gregory of Tours, *Decem libri historiarum* 5.38. Bishop Licinianus met Leander on his return from Constantinople, as he records in 595 in a letter addressed to Gregory the Great, but we cannot give a precise date for their encounter, Licinianus, *Epistola* 1. In an entry dating to 584/585, John of Biclarum, *Chronicon* 77, gives a heading which refers to Leander's "splendour": "Leander Ispalensis ecclesie episcopus clarus habetur." García Moreno, *Leovigildo*, 22–23, n. 15, has suggested that, like other headings in John's *Chronicle*, it is likely that this compliment refers to his opposition to Leovigild.

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seems to imply that Goswintha was to blame for the war when he says that it began as a domestic dispute. He places a phrase in the ablative which appears to speak of action on the part of Goswintha's faction which grammatically is best interpreted as showing that he is blaming the group that had supported the *factione Gosuinthe regine tirannidem assumens*. In Merovingian Gaul, Gregory of Tours does mention Hermenegild's conversion, as did Gregory the Great, writing in Rome. Both of these authors were writing towards the end of the 6th century, shortly after the conflicts they describe and of which they were direct contemporaries. On the other hand, it is clear that in the *regnum Gothorum* itself that care was taken to pass over this event in silence, something found in all our key sources (council *acta*, John of Biclarum, and Isidore) written during or after Reccared's reign.[9] Hermenegild's presence in Seville and his association with Leander cannot be doubted if we trust the testimony of Gregory, who makes this clear in the above-mentioned passage from his *Dialogues*. Gregory states that he knew (*cognouimus*) about these events from many (*multorum*) who visited him *ab Hispaniarum partibus*. Given the friendship the two had formed in Constantinople, Gregory's source was probably Leander.

We can see Leovigild's hand in the religious dimension of the conflict, as in his council of 580 he sought to build bridges that would allow the conversion of Catholics to Arianism, and he conflicted with the Catholic bishops, conflicts which would later be presented as anti-Catholic persecution on his part.[10] During the reign of Reccared and the conversion of the kingdom to Catholicism

9 Isidore, *De viris illustribus* 28: "ut etiam fide eius atque industria populi gentis Gothorum ab arriana insania ad fidem catholicam reuerterentur." On the dating of the beginning of the revolt and Hermenegild's conversion to 579, see García Moreno, *Leovigildo*, 112, *contra* the later date proposed by Roger Collins, "¿Dónde estaban los arrianos en 589?" in *Concilio III de Toledo. XIV Centenario* (Toledo: 1991), 211–22. For Ingundis's role, Gregory of Tours, *Decem libri historiarum* 5.38. For that of Leander, see Gregory the Great, *Dialogi* 3.31. For a grammatical and historical reading of the passage, García Moreno, *Leovigildo*, 102–03. For the support of Brunhild, Ingundis's mother, for Hermenegild and the broader European and Mediterranean context in which these events took place, see Walter Goffart, "Byzantine Policy in the West under Tiberius II and Maurice: The Pretenders Hermenegild and Gundovald (579–585)," *Traditio* 13 (1957), 73–118. For relations between the Merovingian world, Leovigild, Hermenegild, and Reccared, see Castellanos, *Los Godos y la Cruz*, 111ff, 269ff, 295ff. It is only at the end of the 7th century that Valerio of Bierzo, an eccentric author opposed to the church hierarchy, refers in his *De uana saeculi sapientia* 6 to Hermenegild as a kind of martyr, the first such reference in Spain.

10 The main texts are John of Biclarum, *Chronicon* 57, *s. a.* 580; Isidore, *Historia Gothorum* 50 and 55; Gregory of Tours, *Decem libri historiarum* 5.38 and, later in the 7th century, the *Vitas Sanctorum Patrum Emeretensium*, especially book 5. For an evaluation of the documents and the main historiographic theories concerning them, see: Castellanos, *Los Godos y la Cruz*, 69ff.

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after the Third Council of Toledo in 589, letters written by Gregory to Leander show once again their friendship and the level of influence Leander enjoyed, even during the reign of Reccared, who, we must remember, had been an enemy of Hermenegild, and thus presumably of Leander, in the civil war. Nevertheless, there was a political realignment after Hermenegild's defeat upon the accession of Reccared in 586, and Leander went on to hold powerful political influence, which reached its peak at the Third Council of Toledo in 589 and in the *Homily* that he delivered to the king, bishops, and leading lay members of the royal court.[11] When Leander died, at a date that cannot be fixed with certainty but which, as we have seen, can be placed between 599 and 602, Catholicism was the official religion of the Visigothic kingdom and Hermenegild remembered simply as a usurper, *tyrannus*, with both his conversion to Catholicism and any hint that Leander had taken part in his uprising buried in silence. Leander's younger brother, Isidore, succeeded him as bishop of Seville.

2 Isidore as an Author in a Cultural Context

This is, perhaps, the most well-known aspect of Isidore's life. He was the author of a whole series of writings in different genres, including *historiae*, a chronicle, letters, poetry, lexicographical studies, the compilation of the knowledge of the past and present eras, works on religious and political morality, and ecclesiastical and monastic discipline, He enjoyed a long episcopate which ran from around 600/602 until his death in 636. I will not give a full list of his literary output here, but rather a small selection from it. The essential detailed discussion of his works and life is that of Manuel C. Díaz y Díaz in his introduction to the *Etymologiae*.[12] Isidore's friend Braulio, the bishop of Saragossa, wrote a *Renotatio librorum domini Isidori*, a short resumé of Isidore's works. Braulio and Isidore knew one another personally, perhaps since 625/626, and kept up a long correspondence, although we only have some of the letters that they exchanged.[13]

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11 For the details and interpretation of Gregory's letters to Leander, see Vilella, "Gregorio Magno," and Díaz, "Gregorio Magno."

12 Manuel C. Díaz y Díaz, "Introducción general," in *San Isidoro de Sevilla, Etimologías*, trans. José Oroz Reta and Manuel A. Marcos Casquero, 2 vols (Madrid: 1982–83), 1:1–257. See now Martín, "Isidoro de Sevilla."

13 On the date of the possible first meeting and the correspondence between Braulio and Isidore, see now the new edition (and introduction) of the letters, by Ruth Miguel Franco and José Carlos Martín, *Braulionis Caesaraugustani Epistulae et Isidori Hispalensis*

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Just as the date of Isidore's letters has been re-evaluated, similar debates have begun concerning the dates of Isidore's other works. This is most striking with regard to the *Sententiae*, a work for which Cazier and Fontaine have proposed a late date, around 633, while Martín Iglesias suggests *c*.614/615, using as evidence the use that Sisebut made of this work in his hagiography of Desiderius of Vienne, the *Vita Desiderii*, his problems with Brunhild, and the final triumph of Chlothar II. The *Sententiarum libri tres* deals with matters of religion and morality but also focuses on the correct way to exercise political power, forming a guide to how, in Isidore's opinion, a king should conduct himself.[14]

Martín Iglesias has also suggested that Isidore's first work—or at least one of the first—was his *De viris illustribus*, on the grounds that it makes no mention of the death of Eutropius of Valencia, who played a key role at, for example, the Third Council of Toledo; nor does it mention the deaths of Maximus of Zaragoza or John of Biclarum. He also argues convincingly that the early dating of the *De viris illustribus* is shown in the way that the works of authors from the 6th and 7th centuries that Isidore cites in other, probably later, works are not found in the *De viris illustribus*. It is therefore likely that the *De viris illustribus* was written prior to the *Etymologiae*, *De natura rerum*, and *De ortu et obitu patrum*, which have normally been seen as the first of Isidore's works.[15]

From the correspondence between Braulio and Isidore we can see that Braulio had no access to the text of the *Etymologiae* until the beginning of the 630s, despite having asked for a copy from at least 625/626. The *Etymologiae* took a long period to write and edit. They were begun at the beginning of Sisebut's reign (612), and a first version dedicated to the king began to circulate towards the end of his reign, *c*.620 (Sisebut died in 621), but Isidore continued to work on them until around 632/633. The work is often, and with good reason, referred to as an "encyclopedia," as it gathers together an enormous

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epistulae ad Braulionem. Braulionis Caesaraugustani Confessio uel professio Iudaeorum ciuitatis Toletanae, CCSL 114B (Turnhout: 2018), 25* (for the date of the first meeting: 625/626). See in addition José Carlos Martín, ed., *Scripta de uita Isidori Hispalensis episcopi*, CCSL 113B (Turnhout: 2006), 73ff and 65ff. Martín's edition of the *Renotatio* is essential for its revision of the traditional chronology assigned to Isidore's works, for example by José Antonio de Aldama, "Indicaciones sobre la cronología de las obras de s. Isidoro," in *Miscellanea Isidoriana* (Rome: 1936), 57–89.

14 Pierre Cazier, "Les *Sentences* d'Isidore de Séville et le IVe Concile de Tolède: Réflexions sur les rapports entre l'Église et le pouvoir politique en Espagne autour des années 630," *Antigüedad y Cristianismo* 3 (1986), 373–86, and his edition of the *Sententiae*, *Isidorus Hispalensis Sententiae*, CCSL 111 (Turnhout: 1998). See now Martín, *Scripta*, 70–71.

15 José Carlos Martín, "El catálogo de los varones illustres de Isidoro de Sevilla (CPL 1206): contenidos y datación," *Studia Historica. Historia Antigua* 31 (2013), 129–51.

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amount of data over a wide-ranging field of subjects, including botany, mathematics, rhetoric and grammar, and religion. Originally the work was dedicated to King Sisebut (612–21), as shown in the dedicatory preface of the first edition, which has been preserved in various manuscripts. But its final version was dedicated to Braulio. We ought not to read the reference made to Isidore in Braulio's *epistula* II as an indication that he had commissioned the work from him. However, it is clear that in 632/633 he reminded him that it had been seven years since he had asked to see it, and in the *Renotatio*, written after the deaths of Isidore and Sisebut, Braulio was proud to claim that he had commissioned the work ("he had it copied at my request"). Years later, when Ildefonsus of Toledo wrote his *De viris illustribus* he appears in his chapter on Isidore to have accepted Braulio's version of events. When Braulio finally obtained a copy of the *Etymologiae* he saw it was not divided into books, but by themes. He quickly altered this and divided the work into books.[16]

Isidore dedicated his *De natura rerum* to King Sisebut at the same time as the king in turn dedicated to the bishop of Seville his own *Carmen de eclipsibus solis et lunae*, a work written in hexameters that deals with lunar eclipses. The long list of Isidore's works could have been arranged in broad thematic groups, a view recently championed by Codoñer, Andrés, and Martín, and which is followed in this chapter. Thus, we encounter pedagogic works, such as *De natura rerum* or the first book of the *Differentiae*; those dealing with biblical exegesis, such as the *Prooemia*, *De ortu et obitu patrum*, *Allegoriae*, and *Liber numerorum*; works on monastic discipline, like the *Regula monachorum*; works on ecclesiastical discipline, such as the *De ecclesiasticis officiis* and his revision of the *Collectio Hispana* of church councils; works in the defence of religious orthodoxy, such as the second book of the *Differentiae*, the *De fide catholica contra*

16 I accept here the dates proposed by Ruth Miguel Franco and José Carlos Martín in their new edition of the *Epistolarium* of Braulio, cited in n. 13. Braulio's request for the *Etymologiae*, *ep.* II (in the enumeration of Ruth Miguel Franco and José Carlos Martín, dated now post-631). In *Ep.* IV (normally dated to *c.*632/633), Braulio complains to Isidore that he asked for the work seven years ago (as Martín and Miguel Franco explain, this would have been during their first personal meeting in 625/626); after this, Isidore, when he finally sent Braulio a copy of the *Etymologiae*, told him he was sending the text and hoped he would correct it, as he found himself in poor health and had not been able to finish revising it (*Ep.* V, dated to *c.*632–33). On the long period of the *Etymologiae*'s composition, see Díaz y Díaz, "Introducción," 172–74, and Martín, *Scripta*, 79–80 and 258–59 (and also his views, *contra* Díaz y Díaz, on the role played by Sisebut). Braulio's pride is expressed in the phrase *quia rogatu meo fecit*, Braulio, *Renotatio* 44, which Martín believes probably suggests that Braulio is referring to the copies that he made of the text (*Scripta*, 78), and therefore my translation of the sentence. See also Ildefonsus, *De viris illustribus* 8. On the *Etymologiae*, see the chapter by Jacques Elfassi in the present volume.

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Iudaeos; and, of course, historical works, such as the *De viris illustribus*, *Chronica*, *De origine Gothorum, Vandalorum et Sueuorum*, and, in a certain fashion, the *De haeresibus*. Regarding the letters attributed to him, at least seven appear to be authentic: the six sent to Braulio and the one, preserved in some manuscripts, sent to Sisebut along with the *Etymologiae*. The authenticity of the letter sent to Heladius of Toledo remains doubtful.[17]

Isidore's main historical work is the *Historiae*, in which he deals with the Visigoths, Sueves, and Vandals. The most consulted and influential section of this is indubitably the first section, the *De origine Gothorum*, customarily cited as the *Historia Gothorum*. The work has come down to us in both a long and a short version, and there has been a long debate over which of the two is the earlier, with different theories proposed. At present the majority of scholars appear to believe that the short version is the earlier of the two and that the two versions can be dated to 621 and 626, respectively. Isidore finished the first version shortly after the death of Sisebut; at the end of it he suggests that the king had been poisoned. The final chapters of the second version were written during the life of King Suinthila and eulogise him above all because he finally expelled imperial troops from Spanish soil. As we shall see in the following section, seven years later, at the Fourth Council of Toledo, Isidore was to show himself to be much less of an enthusiast for this king. The *Chronicle*, like the *Historiae*, was written in two versions, one produced in 615 and the other in 625/626. In both, Isidore's principal aim was to show that the Visigoths were central to God's plans for mankind and superior to the Romans and other peoples.[18]

17 Carmen Codoñer, María Adelaida Andrés Sanz, José Carlos Martín, "Isidoro de Sevilla," in Codoñer, *La Hispania visigótica*, 139–55, with references to the best editions of each of these works; María Adelaida Andrés Sanz, Carmen Codoñer and José Carlos Martín, "Isidorus Hispalensis ep.," in *La trasmissione dei testi latini del Medioevo. Medieval Latin Texts and their Transmission*, 2 vols, eds. Paolo Chiesa and Lucia Castaldi (Florence: 2004–05), 274–417. These studies differ, especially on matters relating to the dating of Isidore's works, with the traditional point of view as articulated in Aldama, "Indicaciones." See also Pierre Cazier, *Isidore de Séville et la naissance de l'Espagne catholique* (Paris: 1994). For details and bibliography on these works, the essential point of reference remains Díaz y Díaz "Introducción," especially 116ff. For the letters, see Martín, *Scripta*, 263–64.

18 Following the chronology proposed by José Carlos Martín, "La *Crónica Universidad* de Isidoro de Sevilla: circunstancias históricas e ideológicas de su composición y traducción de la misma," *Iberia. Revista de la Antigüedad* 4 (2001), 199–239. See also his edition of the *Chronicle* in *Isidori Hispalensis Chronica*, CCSL 112 (Turnhout: 2003). For Isidore's histories, see the edition and commentary of Cristóbal Rodríguez Alonso, *Las Historias de los Godos, Vándalos y Suevos de Isidoro de Sevilla* (León: 1975), and Luis A. García Moreno, "¿Por qué Isidoro de Sevilla quiso escribir una segunda versión de su *Historia gothorum*?" in *Famille, violence et christianisation au Moyen Âge. Mélanges offerts à Michel Rouche*, eds.

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Isidore died in 636. Concerning his death we have a text written by one of the clergy of Seville, Redemptus, *Obitus beatissimi Isidori Hispalensis episcopi*, which formally is a letter written to a bishop or abbot but in fact takes on the form of a work of hagiography. This tells us that as he was dying, Isidore called on the bishops John of Elepla and Eparcius of Italica, two sees very close to Seville, to administer the rite of penance to him in the church of San Vicente. The subject of the text is the confession, penance, and death of Isidore, and it gives us a date for that death: 4 April 636.[19]

3 Isidore as Bishop in Social, Religious, and Political Contexts

If Leander predeceased Reccared, who died in December 601 and was succeeded by his son, Liuva II, Isidore would already have been bishop of Seville when the new king began his reign. Until his death in 636 Isidore was not only, as we have just seen, a prolific author, but he also participated directly in important affairs of state. This section will attempt to reconstruct his political biography as much as possible in terms of this participation, and also to examine the core

Martin Aurell and Thomas Deswarte (Paris: 2005), 387–408; and Isabel Velázquez, "La doble redacción de la *Historia Gothorum* de Isidoro de Sevilla," in *L'édition critique des oeuvres d'Isidore de Séville. Les recensions multiples*, eds. María Adelaida Andrés Sanz, Jacques Elfassi, and José Carlos Martín (Turnhout: 2008), 91–126. On Isidore's potential support for the Goths, Jocelyn N. Hillgarth, "Historiography in Visigothic Spain," *Settimane di Studio* 17 (1970), 261–311; on provincials in Hispania following Roman traditions, Marc Reydellet, *La royauté dans la littérature latine de Sidoine Apollinaire à Isidore de Séville* (Rome: 1981), 514–16; and on a form of synthesis, Suzanne Teillet, *Des Goths à la nation gothique: Les origines de l'idée de nation en Occident du Ve au VIIe siècle* (Paris: 1984), 473–75, 494 ff. On the ideal of *breuitas* which runs throughout these historiographical works of Isidore, Jamie Wood, "*Brevitas* in the Writings of Isidore of Seville," in *Early Medieval Spain: A Symposium*, eds. Alan Deyermond and Martin J. Ryan (London: 2010), 37–53; and on his conception of historiography, Jamie Wood, "*Religiones* and *gentes* in Isidore of Seville's *Chronica maiora*," in *Post-Roman Transitions. Christian and Barbarian Identities in the Early Medieval West*, eds. Walter Pohl and Gerda Heydemann (Turnhout: 2013), 125–68. See also Wood's chapter in the present volume.

19 This differs from a funerary inscription, a metrical epitaph which is only extant in the manuscript tradition which refers to the place where Leander, Florentina, and Isidore were interred, Díaz y Díaz, "Introducción," 98. See also Pedro Castillo Maldonado, "La muerte de Isidoro de Sevilla: apuntes de crítica histórico-hagiográfica," *Habis* 32 (2001), 577–96. For its possible recipients, the characteristics, and edition of the Latin text, see: *Obitus beatissimi Isidori Hispalensis episcopi* in Martín, *Scripta*, 279ff. On the written memory of Isidore, see: Michael J. Kelly, "The Politics of History-Writing. Problematizing the Historiographical Origins of Isidore of Seville in Early Medieval Hispania," in Fear and Wood, *Isidore of Seville*, 93–110.

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principles of his religious, social, and political beliefs. The period during which he held his episcopate and wielded influence was the product, in political terms, of the recent conversion of the *regnum Gothorum* to Catholicism in which his brother had played a key role. It is this author's view that to a great extent Isidore followed in his brother's footsteps, with regard to both his hostility to Byzantium and his belief that there should be an active role for the episcopate to play in political matters and the religious and social decision-making process of the elite of the *regnum*. Aspects of these elements of his episcopate will be examined below.

The efforts of Leovigild's family to consolidate themselves as a ruling dynasty came to an end with the success of the coup d'état led by Witteric in 603, which led to the overthrow of Liuva II. If we are to believe the hagiographic *Fathers of Merida*, the new king (603–10) had previously participated in the uprising in Merida against Masona and in the finally against Reccared himself *c*.587–88. Isidore was no great supporter of Witteric, judging by his comments on the king in the *Historia Gothorum*. Therefore, this short and negative biographical sketch of Witteric was more or less reproduced in texts of the post-Visigothic era, such as the *Chronica Byzantia-arabica* of the mid-8th century. It is clear that Isidore wrote not a single word about the foreign alliances that Witteric engineered with Chlothar II of Neustria, Theudebert II of Austrasia, or the Lombard Agiulf against Theuderic II of Burgundy, who in the end refused to marry Witteric's daughter, Ermenberg. The reign of Gundemar, though very short (610–12), shows us that Isidore was one of the signatories to the so-called *Decretum Gundemari*, which established the metropolitan status of Toledo over the province of *Carthaginiensis*. From the letters of the governor of Narbonensis, Bulgar, we learn that during Witteric's reign there were wars, about which Isidore says nothing, being fought between the Visigoths and Franks in the south of Gaul.[20]

20 *Vitas sanctorum partum Emeritensium* 5. Broader contexts are covered in E.A. Thompson, *The Goths in Spain* (Oxford: 1969); Abilio Barbero and Marcelo Vigil, *La formación del feudalismo en la Península Ibérica* (Barcelona: 1978); Luis A. García Moreno, *Historia de España Visigoda* (Madrid: 1989); Roger Collins, *Visigothic Spain, 409–711* (Oxford: 2004); Pablo C. Díaz, "La Hispania visigoda," in *Hispania tardorromana y visigoda*, eds. Pablo C. Díaz, Clelia Martínez Maza, and Francisco Javier Sanz Huesma (Madrid: 2007), 259–611; Javier Arce, *Esperando a los árabes* (Madrid: 2011). Isidore mentions Witteric in *Historia Gothorum* 58; see also the *Chronica Byzantia-arabica* 3. On Ermenberg and Witteric's foreign policy, Fredegar, *Chronicon* 4.30–31. On the wars between the Visigoths and the Franks, attested in Bulgar's letters, José Orlandis, *Semblanzas visigodas* (Madrid: 1992), 97ff.

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Sisebut (612–21) and Isidore seem to have had a close relationship. As we have already seen, the king dedicated his poem on lunar eclipses to Isidore, and the bishop of Seville repaid the compliment with his *De natura rerum* and the first edition of the *Etymologiae*. A close reading indicates that the words Isidore used to describe Sisebut's reign in the *Historia Gothorum* and the *Chronica* suggest that he wished his readers to evaluate it in a positive manner. Isidore gives a favourable judgement of the king's military policy. Here he singles out Sisebut as *clarus* and gives details about his campaigns against the peoples of the north of the Iberian Peninsula. He also alludes to the king's campaigns against the imperial army, which, since the war between Agila and Athanagild in the middle of the 6th century, had occupied coastal areas in the east and south of the peninsula. Although both Witteric and Gundemar had also recently campaigned against the Byzantines, Isidore states that Sisebut defeated imperial forces twice and leads us to understand that he had opened negotiations about exchanging prisoners. Isidore ended the short version of the *Historia* with the death of Sisebut, which he says was due to illness or poisoning. As has already been said, it is this version that probably circulated after the death of the king at the beginning of 621, and afterwards Isidore worked on extending the *Historia* (the so-called long version), which ended in 626 with an account of the reign of Suinthila, celebrating his success in expelling the Byzantines.[21]

Isidore's views on the king's policy towards his Jewish subjects, on the other hand, are not so positive. On occasion, such as in his *De ecclesiasticis officiis*, Isidore praises certain aspects of Judaism, such as its preservation of the tradition of reading scripture in synagogues. He had, however, no qualms—indeed, rather the opposite—in asserting that it was a religion of deicides. This can be seen in his *De fide catholica contra Iudaeos*, which was probably written at the beginning of Sisebut's reign. The work, which was dedicated to his sister Florentina and educational in its intent, makes clear the deicidal aspect of Judaism which, as is well known, was one of the foundations for hostility towards the Jews in the Middle Ages and beyond. As has been suggested by several authors, we ought to recognise the profound influence that eschatological thinking had on Isidore's ideas here, especially after the Persians captured Jerusalem in 614, and the Jews' role in the city's fall. When he was compiling his *Chronicle* in 615 Isidore makes scant reference to the topic in the life of Sisebut: "he converted the Jewish subjects of his kingdom to the faith of Christ." However, in both the short version of the *Historia Gothorum*, which ends with Sisebut's death, and the long version, which continues to the reign of Suinthila,

21 Isidore, *Historia Gothorum* 61, and *Chronica* 415.

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Isidore criticises the conversion of the Jews to Catholicism by force "but without understanding." Careful reading of the text shows that the force of Isidore's criticism is not that the Jews were converted per se, but that this was done by force, adding that it should have been undertaken "for reasons of faith." What is clear is that Sisebut's actions mark an increase in hostility toward the Jews in the *regnum Gothorum*, reinforcing decisions taken in the reign of Reccared. It was in this way that the king was to take action against "the accursed perfidy of the Jews." A law promulgated at the beginning of his reign and following the precedent of the late Roman Empire forbade Jewish masters from continuing to own Christian slaves. Proselytising by Jews was to be punished by death and the confiscation of belongings. Isidore's dislike of this policy probably centred on his disapproval of king's intervention in religious matters, and it is certainly the case that at times the king did intervene forcefully in this field. We can see this in the letters he sent to Bishop Eusebius of Tarragona and Bishop Caecilius of Mentesa, rebuking the former for his love of the theatre at a time when he was dealing with the appointment of the next bishop of Barcelona (which belonged to the province of Tarraconensis, of which Eusebius was the metropolitan bishop), and the latter for his intention to retire in order to pursue a monastic career.[22] Isidore was certainly no friend of the Jews and criticises Sisebut's excesses not so much because of his actions towards them but rather because he took what Isidore considers to be a despotic attitude, on the grounds that he had not taken advice from his bishops (and certainly not from Isidore) when making decisions on this matter.

Isidore's direct intervention in collective decisions made by the bishops of the realm can be seen not only in his participation in the council of Gundemar but his role in the Second Council of Seville, held in 619. Church councils, especially after the conversion of the *regnum* to Catholicism under Reccared, had

22 Isidore, *De eccesiasticis officiis* 1.10.1. For the *De fide catholica contra Iudaeos*, see the study and translation of Eva Castro Caridad and Francisco Peña Fernández, *Isidoro de Sevilla. Sobre la fe católica contra los judíos* (Seville: 2012). See also: Isidore, *Chronica* 416 and *Historia Gothorum* 60—the key words are "sed non secundum scientiam […] potestate […] fidei ratione." The letters to Eusebius and Caecilius are numbers 6 and 1, respectively, in *Epistulae Wisigothicae*. The laws referred to are *Lex Visigothorum* 12.2.13 and 12.2.14, while at 12.2.14 there is a justification and exposition of the concept of "Ebreorum execranda perfidia." On eschatology and the potential influence of the situation in Palestine, García Moreno, *Hispania*, 148–52; Díaz, "La Hispania," 401; Vallejo, *Hispania*, 331ff; on anti-Jewish feeling in the Visigothic kingdom, along with relevant bibliography, see: Raúl González Salinero, *Las conversiones forzosas de los judíos en el reino visigodo* (Madrid: 2000), and his chapter in the present volume. In addition, see Wolfram Drews, *The Unknown Neighbour. The Jew in the Thought of Isidore of Seville* (Leiden: 2006). On Isidore's views in relation to the law, see the chapter by Andrew Fear in this volume.

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become a mechanism for making political as well as ecclesiastical decisions. This can be seen in the fact that the prelates dealt with, *inter alia*, matters concerning the regulation of a variety of institutions, social relations, and the role of church property in the wider community. The council in Seville followed Roman tradition closely. This, in this author's opinion, can be attributed to the influence of Isidore and is seen in its formal arrangements and its references to traditional legislation. It is worth noting the presence at this council, held with a province-wide remit for the province of *Baetica*, of Sisisclus, the "rectore rerum publicarum," and Suanila, the "rectore rerum fiscalium," i.e. senior secular functionaries of the *regnum*. The Council touched on various matters, including boundaries between dioceses which were to be returned to their former state, having previously been lost to the Byzantines and only recently recovered by the Visigoths. Other concerns were simple territorial disputes, such as that between Fulgentius of Ecija (Isidore's brother) and Honorius of Cordoba. Various points were made about ecclesiastical discipline, including an establishment of the correct episcopal hierarchy in the province. There was also a debate with an easterner who in the eyes of the assembled clergy was an acephalic heretic of the Monophysite tradition. This debate finally concluded with his recognition of Catholic orthodoxy as defined by the council.

In 622/624, during the reign of Suinthila, a further council, the third, was held in Seville. This was excluded from the *Colección Canónica Hispana*, a compilation of late- and post-Roman conciliar acts that were collated in various recensions during the course of the 7th century and of which Isidore is thought to have been one of the main editors. The result was that its *acta* have not survived, and we only have allusions to them in other council records. At this meeting of 622/624, where Isidore's would have been the decisive voice, Bishop Martianus of Ecija was condemned for defaming the king, Suinthila, consulting a soothsayer about the king's life, and holding inappropriate relations with women, including a slave. The Council's delegates deposed Martianus, appointing his accuser, Aventius, in his place. The story of Martianus's redress was a long one and only came to an end after Isidore's death when, at the Sixth Council of Toledo in 638, Martianus was finally restored to his see. In 633, at the Fourth Council of Toledo, where Isidore was again likely the most influential participant, Aventius's machinations ought to have been clear and Martianus restored to his episcopal rank. But he was not restored to Ecija. Given these facts it appears that Isidore remained hostile to Martianus throughout his life and that it was only after his death that the bishop was able to recover his see.[23]

23 For the new role which the councils came to play after Reccared's conversion, Castellanos, *Los Godos y la Cruz*, and for them and for the later councils, Rachel Stocking, *Bishops,*

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As had happened in the case of the deposition of Liuva II by Witteric in 603, Sisebut's dynastic plans came to nothing. He had planned to pass power on to his son, Reccared II, who in any event only remained on the throne for a short time. In 621 Suinthila (621–31) came to power. Suinthila had been one of Sisebut's generals, and military actions features strongly in what we know of his reign. He campaigned, for example, against the Basques in the north. His most well-known exploit was his victory over the Byzantines, resulting in their final expulsion from Hispania. Isidore praised this victory at great length, although we must not forget that the final version of his *Chronicle*, like that of the *Historia Gothorum*, came to a close in 626, just after the expulsion of the Byzantines but still in Suinthila's reign. The fragments concerning Suinthila which were added to the *Chronicle* are, like the rest of the text, scanty. In the *Historia Gothorum*, despite the brevity imposed by its genre, Isidore's comments are eulogistic. He underlines that Suinthila occupied the lands the imperial troops had managed to retain and was the first king to rule over all *Spania*. Isidore, who wrote this account in 626, wished to promote the notion that under Suinthila the *regnum* of the Visigoths had reached its apogee: if the kingdom had attained religious unity with Reccared, it now achieved territorial unity under Suinthila. It was with this event that Isidore decided to end the *Historia Gothorum*—an apotheosis which continues in Chapters 63–65, where he praises the king's campaigns and his virtues, such as his sharing the throne with his son Reccimer. This was another attempt to set up a dynastic succession in the manner attempted by both Reccared, who had succeeded his father and sought to pass on power to his son, and Sisebut. Isidore's writing shows that he was happy with the intended succession of Reccimer, describing him as "worthy to accede to the kingdom." In any event, Suinthila's family did not remain in power long. In 631, a coup devised in Narbonensis and led by Sisenand was successful. This Gothic magnate enjoyed the support of the Frankish king Dagobert. He paid for this with a substantial amount of gold: first in the form of a *missorium* which had once been given to the Goths by Aetius, and later with a further 200,000 *solidi*. A Frankish army commanded by Abundantius and Venerandus penetrated as far as Saragossa, where Sisenand was proclaimed king. Fredegar, a Frankish chronicler, justified the coup by implying

councils, and consensus in the Visigothic Kingodm, 589–633 (Ann Arbor: 2000). For a detailed discussion of the case of Martianus, Rachel Stocking, "Martianus, Aventius, and Isidore: Provincial Councils in Seventh Century Spain," *Early Medieval Europe* 6 (1997), 169–88. A recent work on the councils of the Visigothic kingdom provides a bibliography of previous discussions: Pablo. C. Díaz, "Concilios y obispos en la península ibérica (siglos VI–VIII)," *Settimane di Studio* 61 (2014), 1095–158, esp. 1119–20 on the formal arrangements and content of the Second Council of Seville.

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that Suinthila had proven to be a bad king, stating that he had provoked all the magnates of his kingdom.[24]

4 Conclusion

In the middle of the 8th century, the author of what is now called the *Mozarabic Chronicle of 754* stressed the importance of the council called in Toledo during the third year of Sisenand's reign, and noted the presence of Isidore and Braulio.[25] This was the Fourth Council of Toledo, held in 633, at which Isidore played an important role. The council dealt with a disparate series of matters, and Isidore's influence on it is clear. Its condemnation of Suinthila and recognition of Sisenand, who, as has been shown, came to power by force, deposing his predecessor, is particularly striking. Isidore had obviously changed his public stance on Suinthila, which was now very different from what he had written in 625/626 in the second edition of the *Historia Gothorum*. In some ways its canons firmly reflect the themes prevalent in Isidore's earlier works, such as opposition to the Jews, ecclesiastical discipline, and ethics. The Toledan council of 633 was to present, with the blessing of his colleagues, a summary of Isidore's thought on a wide variety of subjects. There are fulsome views on the behaviour of bishops, clergymen, and even monks. However, the council also dealt with the question of the Jews, banning them from holding offices and from owning slaves (cc. 65 and 66). These canons discuss the conversion of the Jews but assert that, despite the actions of Sisebut, Jewish rites continued to be practised, and they exhorted bishops to investigate this problem and force those concerned to convert to the true faith. The verb used here, *coerceat* (c. 59), leaves no doubt about what is intended and contradicts a previous canon which proscribes the use of force as a means of converting Jews (c. 57). Apart from the Jews, another important preoccupation of the council was the

24 Isidore, *Chronica* 416B and 417; *Historia Gothorum* 62: "[…] urbes residuas, quas in Spaniis Romana manus agebat, proelio conserto obtinuit […] totius Spaniae intra oceani fretum monarchiam regni primus idem potitus"; 65: "[…] et regni successione dignissimus." See also Fredegar, *Chronicon* 4.73. For a discussion of the ideological content in Isidore's passages about Suinthila, Jamie Wood, *The Politics of Identity in Visigothic Spain: Religion and Power in the Histories of Isidore of Seville* (Leiden: 2012), 176–79. On the background of Suinthila's reign and the coronation of Sisenand, Luis A. García Moreno, "La oposición a Suintila: iglesia, monarquía y nobleza y en el reino visigodo," *Polis* 3 (1991), 13–24.

25 *Chronica Muzarabica* 17: "[…] constante adhuc Ispalense Ysidoro episcopo uel in multis iam libris fulgente mirifice […]," in *Continuatio Isidoriana Hispana. Crónica Mozárabe de 754*, ed. José Eduardo López Pereira (León: 2009), which corrects his previous *Crónica Mozárabe de 754. Edición crítica y traducción* (Zaragoza: 1980).

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ownership of slaves and control of freedmen. There are various canons dedicated to these matters. Perhaps the most striking of the bishops' views here is that which insists, under Isidore's influence, that the obligations that its freed slaves owed to the Church "would never die" (c. 70, on ecclesiastical freedmen).

The most notable canon of the Fourth Council of Toledo is probably number 75. This summarises Isidore's views on monarchy and attempts to put into practice his demand for episcopal participation in the election of the monarch. The council of 633 was perhaps the high point of Isidore's direct participation in the political life of the *regnum Gothorum* and the culmination of his religious, cultural, and social thinking. The idea of a kingdom united by its Catholic faith and monarchy with a secure territory, the ideological grounding of which Isidore had earlier expounded in his *Laus Spaniae*, combined with the direct participation of bishops in the running of its affairs, is clearly visible at every turn in the *acta* of the Council—and in a great number of Isidore's other writings.[26]

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26 The text known as *De laude Spaniae* is the beginning of Isidore's *Historiae*. In this text, Isidore offers a hyperbolic elegy of *Spania*, focussing on the country's geography and natural resources. He provides *Spania* with a feminine persona, which enabled him to play with the image that, having been dominated by Rome, she was finally conquered by the Goths. On Isidore's historiographical production, see the chapter by Jamie Wood in this volume. An edition of the text of the council can be found in Gonzalo Martínez Díez and Félix Rodríguez, *La colección canónica hispana, v. Concilios hispanos: segunda parte* (Madrid: 1992). See also Stocking, *Bishops*; Díaz, "Concilios," 1121ff. On the attitude of Isidore towards the monarchy, see the chapter by Andrew Fear in this volume.

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CHAPTER 3

God's Librarian: Isidore of Seville and His Literary Agenda

Graham Barrett

> Anyone reading these notes without knowing me, without having read and understood *everything* of what I've written elsewhere, would remain blind and deaf to them, while he would *finally* feel that he was understanding easily.
>
> JACQUES DERRIDA[1]

Isidore of Seville could be a man of few words: about himself and his project above all.[2] No one can read his works, the *Etymologies* especially, without forming an impression of a writer "in something of a time-warp," but what exactly was he up to?[3] Confronted by an absence of obvious motivation for his vast output across many genres, we have in the main played the get-out-of-jail-free card of "educating the clergy," substituting assumed audience and (much more profitably) reception history for probing authorial intention.[4] One obstacle to

1 Quoted in B. Peeters, *Derrida: A Biography*, A. Brown, trans. (Cambridge: 2013), 292.

2 I should like to express my gratitude here to Fernando Luis Corral, Peter Linehan, José Manuel Ruiz Asencio, Faith Wallis, Chris Wickham, Jamie Wood, and George Woudhuysen; and, for productive procrastination, to Laura Carlson.

When citing primary sources, I provide section or document numbers in preference to pages wherever possible; for classical texts, unless otherwise indicated, I have consulted the *Loeb Classical Library*. All translations are my own.

I use the following abbreviations: *CCH*: G. Martínez Díez and F. Rodríguez, eds., *La colección canónica Hispana*, 6 vols (Madrid: 1966–2002); *LV*: *Lex Visigothorum*, in *Leges Visigothorum. MGH Leges nationum Germanicarum* 1, ed. K. Zeumer (Hanover: 1902), 33–456; *P.Vis.*: I. Velázquez Soriano, ed., *Las pizarras visigodas. Entre el Latín y su disgregación. La lengua hablada en Hispania, siglos VI–VIII* (Burgos: 2004).

3 C. Wickham, *Framing the Early Middle Ages: Europe and the Mediterranean, 400–800* (Oxford: 2005), 95, n. 101; cf. J. Henderson, *The Medieval World of Isidore of Seville: Truth from Words* (Cambridge: 2007), 5–7, "sorry to say" indeed.

4 See classically I. Gutiérrez Zuluaga, "Los *Orígenes* de Isidoro de Sevilla y su trascendencia didáctica (I)," *Revista Española de Pedagogía* 28 (1970), 219–36; I. Gutiérrez Zuluaga, "Los *Orígenes* de Isidoro de Sevilla y su trascendencia didáctica (II)," *Revista Española de Pedagogía* 28 (1970), 311–27; P. Riché, *Education and Culture in the Barbarian West from the Sixth through the Eighth Century*, J.J. Contreni, trans. (Columbia, SC: 1976), 246–65, 274–79, 281–90, 293–303, 352–60; J. Fontaine, *Isidore de Séville. Genèse et originalité de la culture hispanique au temps*

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getting a handle on Isidore is that "the bibliography"—both his and ours—"is of cosmic proportions."[5] Here I shall not even pretend to be treating him in the round; instead I mean only to offer a series of impressionistic *semblanzas* of what I understand to be the essential elements of his context, personality, and literary agenda.[6] It is always tempting to appoint Isidore a squadron leader for the rescue corps of the classics, confining debate to the mission's chances of success, but when viewed through the lens of the Visigothic slate texts and their evidence for a continuous history of Latin literacy in the Iberian Peninsula, he comes newly into focus as operating still very much in a late Roman cultural world.[7] If we read his letters with care, we recognise too that Isidore was altogether less worldly than we have made him out to be; his priorities lay elsewhere, his thought and energy were spent in constant revision of both ancient knowledge and Patristic exegesis, memorialised in the complex transmission of his *opera*. And by attending in particular to his prefaces to those works, we perceive an anxious determination to render the universal manageable—and on his own particular terms.

"The compiler (*compilator*)," says he, "is one who combines the words of another with his own, as makers of pigment traditionally grind up various ingredients mixed in a mortar. The poet of Mantua was accused of this crime once … He answered, 'Great strength is needed to prise the club of Hercules from his grasp.'"[8] Like Virgil taking Dante by the hand, Isidore can seem like a tour guide to a vast museum of antiquities.[9] But open the *Etymologies* to any

des Wisigoths (Turnhout: 2000), 129–63; but also C. Codoñer, "La iglesia y la cultura hispanogoda," in *La Iglesia en la historia de España*, ed. J.A. Escudero (Madrid: 2014), 227–42; now with e.g. A. Fear and J. Wood, eds., *Isidore of Seville and his Reception in the Early Middle Ages: Transmitting and Transforming Knowledge* (Amsterdam: 2016); C. Cardelle de Hartmann, "Uso y recepción de las *Etymologiae* de Isidoro," in *Wisigothica. After M.C. Díaz y Díaz*, eds. C. Codoñer and P. Farmhouse Alberto (Florence: 2014), 477–502.

5 R. Wright, review of: M. del Carmen Bobes Naves, *La semiótica como teoría lingüística*, in *Bulletin of Hispanic Studies* 53 (1976), 51.

6 Some contrasting examples are E. Brehaut, *An Encyclopedist of the Dark Ages: Isidore of Seville* (New York: 1912), 15–88; J. Madoz, *San Isidoro de Sevilla. Semblanza de su personalidad literaria* (León: 1960); M.C. Díaz y Díaz, "Isidoro el hombre," in *San Isidoro, doctor Hispaniae*, ed. J. González Fernández (Seville: 2002), 69–79; cf. J. Orlandis, *Semblanzas visigodas* (Madrid: 1992), from which Isidore is notably absent.

7 J. Wood, "*Religiones* and *gentes* in Isidore of Seville's *Chronica maiora*," in *Post-Roman Transitions: Christian and Barbarian Identities in the Early Medieval West*, eds. W. Pohl and G. Heydemann (Turnhout: 2013), 125–28, makes parallel observations.

8 Isidore, *Etymologiae* 10.C.44.

9 See e.g. N. Messina, "Le citazioni classiche nelle *Etymologiae* di Isidoro di Siviglia," *Archivos Leoneses* 68 (1980), 205–65.

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page and its author will stare out at you in a different mask. He lives in Christian time: "in a Christian mouth, the names for the days of the week sound nicer."[10] He distills Christian knowledge: the Bible and ecclesiastical offices; God, angels, and the saints; the Church and deviant sects.[11] Yet he lives too in pagan time: "with this foot (*bacchius*) the Bacchanalia—that is, the ceremonies of the god Liber—are celebrated."[12] He distills pagan knowledge: "We also read of the burnt sacrifice which the Arcadians offered their god Lycaeus, and whoever consumed it was transfigured into a beast. This does not seem altogether doubtful."[13] Of course, he rejects ancient religion: "in this spectacle they soil themselves with the worship of their gods … impure divinities possess the circus."[14] And he refutes its claims: "this has been entirely confabulated by the poets, in an attempt to enhance their gods with some figures of speech; historiography reveals them to be fallen and full of the ignominy of shame."[15] He writes instead as a Christian: "Amongst us Christians, the first to write a history was Moses."[16] But he also writes, crucially, as a Latin: "Ennius was the first to use it (elegiac metre) amongst us Latin speakers."[17] All these are guises of a single author, who held in his grip the great chain of language, stretching from pagan antiquity to his Christian era: "in the fiction of poetry the winds, to signal their speed, are said to have wings; so also Holy Scripture says, 'he rides on the wings of the winds' (Psalm 104:3)."[18] What I hope to show in the following pages is that Isidore of Seville, seen in the mirror of his own words, aimed not to become catechist to centuries of priests and monks, nor indeed to achieve any great stylistic or generic innovation as such, but to carry through the scholarly project which he had set for himself: to take full stock of classical civilisation and recatalogue it for good in the epistemology of God.

1. The Stone Guest

The kingdom of the Visigoths in Iberia has long revelled gaily in historiographical esteem for its literate and literary culture, enjoying a reputation far greater

10 Isidore, *Etymologiae* 5.30.11.
11 Isidore, *Etymologiae* 6–8.
12 Isidore, *Etymologiae* 1.17.11.
13 Isidore, *Etymologiae* 8.9.5-6.
14 Isidore, *Etymologiae* 18.41.3.
15 Isidore, *Etymologiae* 8.11.29.
16 Isidore, *Etymologiae* 1.42.1.
17 Isidore, *Etymologiae* 1.39.15.
18 Isidore, *Etymologiae* 7.5.3.

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than the Alans and so many other barbarian neighbours, with a respectable *proxime accessit* reserved perhaps for Ostrogothic Italy.[19] Ultimately this derives from an apparent intellectual sophistication, realised in and propagated through an "Isidorian Renaissance": study of the basics of a classical education in creative fusion with Christian doctrine by Isidore in Seville and his episcopal successors in 7th-century Zaragoza and Toledo.[20] Beyond the bright foreground of such bookish bishops, meanwhile, the literacy of the laity has been presumed as much as proven, fortified by encouraging noises from the Visigothic law code, in which documents remain a major intermediary of transaction, and the Visigothic legal formulary, in which the endurance of a public notariate seems indicated. Yet the balance of the evidence gives voice primarily to a social elite: a clutch of classicising compositions by King Sisebut and Count Bulgar in the first decades of the 7th century, some legislative references to lay judges on the job, and certain hagiographical cameos made by educated laymen.[21] Visigothic society, in other words, has a Roman feel, of the classics and of cultivation, of things still done by the book, which has seemed to find retrospective confirmation in the more richly documented kingdoms and counties established in the Christian north after the Islamic conquest of the Peninsula in 711. There the use of charters was routine amongst the laity as well as ecclesiastics, while both norms and procedures laid out in the Visigothic law code were explicitly in force at local courts staffed by laymen, albeit with a pronounced clerical and monastic presence.[22]

Ex Toleto semper aliquid novi—it is all thanks to the Second Council of Toledo: credit this ecclesiastical oversight activity in 527 with ensuring the continuation of Latin learning in Iberia.[23] The first canon provides *en passant* that the bishop should see to the education of child oblates until the age of 18, when they might manifest, regrettably, a desire for married life; scholars,

19 J. Fontaine, *Isidore de Séville et la culture classique dans l'Espagne wisigothique*, 3 vols (Paris: 1959–83), 2:831–61; J.N. Hillgarth, *The Visigoths in History and Legend* (Toronto: 2009), esp. 10–20.

20 Fontaine, *Isidore de Séville et la culture classique*, 2:863–88; cf. J. Wood and J. Martínez Jiménez, "New Directions in the Study of Visigothic Spain," *History Compass* 14 (2016), 34.

21 Riché, *Education*, 246–65.

22 R. Collins, "Literacy and the Laity in Early Mediaeval Spain," reprinted in *Law, Culture, and Regionalism in Early Medieval Spain* (Aldershot: 1992), 114–18, 124–33; W. Davies, *Acts of Giving: Individual, Community, and Church in Tenth-Century Christian Spain* (Oxford: 2007), 88–112, 139–63; W. Davies, *Windows on Justice in Northern Iberia, 800–1000* (Farnham: 2016), 121–45, 155–231; cf. A.J. Kosto, "Laymen, Clerics, and Documentary Practices in the Early Middle Ages: the Example of Catalonia," *Speculum* 80 (2005), 53–56.

23 P. Linehan, *History and the Historians of Medieval Spain* (Oxford: 1993), vii.

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observing renewed effort at the Fourth Council of Toledo in 633 to ameliorate sacerdotal ignorance, have detected a trend between these points, the early medieval Church attaching progressively greater importance to the schooling of its members.[24] If so, the fruit was not immediate. The 6th century offers scant prolegomenon to the achievements of Isidore and his elder brother Leander: leaving to one side Paschasius of Dume and Martin of Braga, twin leading lights of the Suevic intelligentsia, what we have amounts to the biblical commentaries of Apringius of Beja and Justus of Urgell, the epistles of Eutropius of Valencia, Licinianus of Cartagena, and Montanus of Toledo, and the chronicle of John of Vallclara.[25] Isidore profiles all those authors, Montanus excepted, in his bio-bibliography *On Illustrious Men*, with the additions of Justinianus of Valencia, Severus of Malaga, and Maximus of Zaragoza, whose works may or may not be lost; there is scarcely a hint of any literary hinterland existing beyond this roster.[26] Should we therefore join company with those who envision "the last Father" of the Latin West as the churchman, so to speak, in an age of decline, steeling himself to save an entire culture?[27]

There is, in fact, contemporary evidence for reconstructing literacy at a less exalted level: the Visigothic *pizarras* or slates, 163 texts and uncounted numerical inscriptions, almost all fragmentary, found (and still being found) scattered across the northern Meseta, mainly in the rural environs of Ávila and

24 II Toledo (ed. *CCH* 4, 345–66), 1; IV Toledo (ed. *CCH* 5, 161–274), 25–26; F. Martín Hernández, "Escuelas de formación del clero en la España visigoda," in *La patrología toledano-visigoda. XXVII Semana española de teología* (Madrid: 1970), 65–78; J. Fontaine, "Fins et moyens de l'enseignement ecclésiastique dans l'Espagne wisigothique," *Settimane di Studio* 19, 2 vols (Spoleto: 1972), 1:145–202; M.C. Díaz y Díaz, "La penetración cultural latina en Hispania en los siglos VI–VII," in *De Isidoro al siglo XI. Ocho estudios sobre la vida literaria peninsular* (Barcelona: 1976), 19; I. Velázquez Soriano, "Las pizarras visigodas como reflejo de una cultura," in *Los visigodos y su mundo* (Madrid: 1998), 132–33.

25 See C. Codoñer, ed., *La Hispania visigótica y mozárabe. Dos épocas en su literatura* (Salamanca: 2010), 49–92; J.C. Martín, *Sources latines de l'Espagne tardo-antique et médiévale (V^e–XIVe siècles). Répertoire bibliographique* (Paris: 2010), 124–42; cf. D.J. Wasserstein, "Ibn Biklarish—Isra'ili," in *Ibn Baklarish's Book of Simples: Medical Remedies between Three Faiths in Twelfth-Century Spain*, ed. C. Burnett (Oxford: 2008), 105–06, on identifying the venerable Biclar ("location unknown") with Vallclara.

26 J.C. Martín and S. Iranzo Abellán, "Justo de Urgel, *Sermo de S. Vincentio* (CPL 1092): estudio de su tradición manuscrita, edición crítica y traducción," *Anuario de Estudios Medievales* 42 (2012), 230–31; O. Zwierlein, ed., *Severi episcopi "Malacitani (?)" in Evangelia libri XII. Das Trierer Fragment der Bücher VIII–X* (Munich: 1994), 11–34; R. Collins, "Maximus, Isidore, and the *Historia Gothorum*," in *Historiographie im frühen Mittelalter*, eds. A. Scharer and G. Scheibelreiter (Vienna: 1994), 345–58.

27 Isidore, *De viris illustribus*, 17, 21, 29, 31, 32 (cf. 20, 30, 33); P. Séjourné, *Le dernier père de l'Église. Saint Isidore de Séville. Son rôle dans l'histoire du droit canonique* (Paris: 1929), 485–93.

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Salamanca, though also farther afield.[28] The majority, to judge by palaeography, come from the 6th and 7th centuries, but stratigraphic context has dated some numerical finds as far back as the late 4th or early 5th century.[29] As such, the slates, through their many different uses in everyday note-taking and record-keeping, land management, business transactions and legal affairs, teaching, learning, and Christian religious practice, document a continuity in the social centrality of practical, functional lay literacy from the late Roman world proper to the end of the Visigothic period (and beyond).[30] Despite the rustic setting, this literacy was to a degree commonplace: with our own eyes we see many hands capable of writing a comprehensible Latin, even as we find no trace of local schools or ecclesiastical structures of securely contemporary date.[31] The slates themselves provide the evidence for the underlying education, in that a good number seem to have been used for pedagogical purposes. When treated in ascending order of complexity, these reveal a "ground-level curriculum" which laid the literate foundation for the literary culture of Isidore and his friends.[32]

28 *P.Vis.*, 17–44; J.M. Abascal, H. Gimeno, and I. Velázquez, *Epigrafía hispánica. Catálogo del Gabinete de Antigüedades* (Madrid: 2000), 295–339; I. Martín Viso, "The 'Visigothic' Slates and their Archaeological Contexts," *Journal of Medieval Iberian Studies* 5 (2013), 145–68; cf. T. Cordero Ruiz and I. Martín Viso, "Sobre los usos y la cronología de las pizarras numerales: reflexiones a partir del caso del yacimiento de Valdelobos (Montijo, Badajoz)," *Archivo Español de Arqueología* 85 (2012), 253–66. What follows draws on G. Barrett, *Everyday Literacy in Visigothic Spain from the Ground Up* (M.St. thesis, University of Oxford, 2008); much of this is taken up by N. Everett, "Lay Documents and Archives in Early Medieval Spain and Italy, *c.* 400–700," in *Documentary Culture and the Laity in the Early Middle Ages*, eds. W.C. Brown, M. Costambeys, M. Innes, and A. Kosto (Cambridge: 2013), 82–93.

29 S. Dahí Elena, "Un contexto cerámico de la Antigüedad tardía: el yacimiento de San Pelayo (Aldealengua, Salamanca). Nuevos datos sobre la cronología de las pizarras visigodas," *Pyrenae* 38 (2007), 93–96; V. Pérez de Dios, "Nuevo epígrafe romano procedente del Cortinal de San Juan (Salvatierra de Tormes, Salamanca)," *Zephyrus* 76 (2015), 195–99.

30 See F.J. Fernández Nieto, "A Visigothic Charm from Asturias and the Classical Tradition of Phylacteries against Hail," in *Magical Practice in the Latin West: Papers from the International Conference held at the University of Zaragoza*, eds. R.L. Gordon and F.M. Simón (Leiden: 2010), 551–54.

31 Díaz y Díaz, "La penetración," 18–19; Velázquez Soriano, "Las pizarras," 129, 132; I. Velázquez Soriano, "La cultura gráfica en la Hispania visigoda: las escrituras anónimas," in *Visigoti e Longobardi*, eds. J. Arce and P. Delogu (Florence: 2001), 185–89, 193–95, 208–09; cf. J.M. Ruiz Asencio, "La escritura y el libro," in *Historia de España Menéndez Pidal, III. España visigoda, II. La monarquía, la cultura, las artes*, ed. J.M. Jover Zamora (Madrid: 1991), 189–98.

32 I. Velázquez Soriano, *Las pizarras visigodas: edición crítica y estudio* (Murcia: 1989), 623–38; *P.Vis.* 83, 105–10.

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At the elementary stage, the simplest "educational slates" bear random letters in dispersed arrangement; others have partial or whole alphabets, comparable to papyri, tablets, and ostraca employed in Roman and late antique Egyptian teaching contexts for writing practice.[33] After this preparation, students progressed to whole words and phrases: one slate preserves a single word marked out between rubrics, recalling examples from Egypt where an instructor wrote a set sentence or phrase and pupils transcribed it within guidelines.[34] Another has various declined forms of *dominus* and *domina*, while on a third the same clause, *suscepimus per castros* ("we have received [X amount] through the fortified settlements"), is repeated at least six times, clearly attesting a process of learning by rote (to some, however, the latter is an obvious instance of tax collection in progress).[35] At a more advanced level, students copied out Scriptural and liturgical passages, typically from the Psalter—a standard "textbook" for the medieval classroom—in its distinctive Visigothic-Mozarabic tradition: while not of Iberian origin, the 6th-century *Rule of the Master* treats learning letters and studying the Psalms and canticles in just such conjunction, and the prescribed method of transcription and memorisation could account for the errors and omissions in these epigraphic extracts.[36] Abbreviations for "antiphonal" and "responsory" are also to be found on one slate, indicating that a liturgical manuscript was to hand, and the correction of mistakes made in copying certain words does suggest a teaching context, much like what seems to be an arithmetic exercise on a similar slate.[37] After practising letters, words, and sentences, students were finally drilled in composition: classicising moral epistles consisting of passages drawn from Scripture and the *Distichs of Cato*, another common late antique primer, or official correspondence prepared to template in suitably more ornate script.[38] One such royal petition addressed to Reccared is even partially repeated several times, as if the writer were struggling

33 Letters: *P.Vis.* 21, 24, 84–85, 87, 99–100, 145, 147, 154–55, 163; alphabets: *P.Vis.* 25, 57, 105–06; Riché, *Education*, 461–63; Velázquez Soriano, "Las pizarras," 134–35; R. Cribiore, *Writing, Teachers, and Students in Graeco-Roman Egypt* (Atlanta: 1996), 35–118.

34 *P.Vis.* 33; Cribiore, *Writing*, 119–52; see e.g. London, British Library, Add MS 34186.

35 *P.Vis.* 161, 20; cf. I. Martín Viso, "Tributación y escenarios locales en el centro de la Península Ibérica: algunas hipótesis a partir del análisis de la pizarras 'visigodas,'" *Antiquité Tardive* 14 (2006), 283–90.

36 *P.Vis.* 7, 58, 62–63, 127, 140, 148; J.M. Ruiz Asencio, "Pizarra visigoda con Credo," in *Escritos dedicados a José María Fernández Catón*, eds. M.C. Díaz y Díaz, J.M. Díaz de Bustamante, and M. Domínguez García, 2 vols (León: 2004), 2:1317–28; *Regula Magistri* 50.12–15, 43, 64–65, 68–69; cf. Riché, *Education*, 463–65.

37 *P.Vis.* 7, 58; cf. Velázquez Soriano, "Las pizarras," 133–35; Velázquez Soriano, "La cultura," 200–05.

38 See e.g. *P.Vis.* 59.

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to master some of its forms, while on the reverse side we read the opening of a letter to a lord by a second hand; the slate was a "workbook" shared between two advanced pupils, learning to compose the texts clearly central to daily life by assembling portfolios of drafts.[39]

So, who were these students, and who were their teachers? For most of us, the Dark Ages have given way to a repackaged and rebranded late antiquity and early Middle Ages of bracing sociocultural originality and complexity.[40] But one tenacious element of the old paradigm is a conceptual division between the laity and the clergy, the latter still so easy to treat without really being aware of it as canny manipulators of a restricted "temple literacy."[41] Yet in a world before surplus and security, especially in the countryside, both shared the same everyday concerns, and we should be wary of erecting boundaries between them unless the sources dictate that we do so. In the case of the slates, there is little evidence to justify setting any limit on who could have been their writers, readers, or users otherwise. Social status was not a determining factor: slate records of land management were drawn up by peasant administrators and proprietors alike, equally able at least to jot down an *aide-mémoire* or two in the course of discharging their responsibilities.[42] Social order, similarly, does not appear to have been a constraint: personal titles are vanishingly rare, and even the few slate charters naming *fratres* in their address clauses may not mean ecclesiastics, since the label was also part of a simple honorific for laymen in the contemporary lexicon.[43] Most revealing of all is the fact that at least one document (perhaps two) is a holograph, a practice envisioned and sanctioned by Visigothic law, so long as appropriate form was observed and witnesses were present.[44] Here on the northern Meseta, drawing up legal papers

39 *P.Vis.* 128; cf. I. Velázquez Soriano, "El *suggerendum* de Tarra a Recaredo," *Antiquité Tardive* 4 (1996), 294; Velázquez Soriano, "Las pizarras," 135–36; Velázquez Soriano, "La cultura," 205–08.

40 N. Everett, "Literacy from Late Antiquity to the Early Middle Ages, *c.* 300–800 AD," in *The Cambridge Handbook of Literacy*, eds. D.R. Olson and N. Torrance (Cambridge: 2009), 362–63; cf. I.N. Wood, "Review Article: Landscapes Compared," *Early Medieval Europe* 15 (2007), 223–37; R. Collins, "Review Article: Making Sense of the Early Middle Ages," *English Historical Review* 124 (2009), 641–65; both offer important, if not equally measured, critical reflections.

41 See the classic essay by S.J. Tambiah, "Literacy in a Buddhist Village in North-East Thailand," in *Literacy in Traditional Societies*, ed. J. Goody (Cambridge: 1968), 85–131.

42 *P.Vis.* 45–46, 52; cf. R.S. Bagnall, *The Kellis Agricultural Account Book* (*P.Kell. IV Gr. 96*) (Oxford: 1997), 70–72, an essential point of comparison.

43 *P.Vis.* 8, 41–42; D. Fernández, "What is the *De fisco Barcinonensi* About?" *Antiquité Tardive* 14 (2006), 217–24; P.D. King, *Law and Society in the Visigothic Kingdom* (Cambridge: 1972), 82–83.

44 *P.Vis.* 8, 39; *LV* 2.5, *passim*, esp. 16; King, *Law*, 109–13.

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(stones) by oneself or with help as needed was a matter of course, facilitated by a free writing medium and the availability of models; local society participated in a common tradition inherited from the late Roman world, of creating charters at personal initiative to secure rights to property and manage the settlement of disputes.[45]

Both the medium itself, which offers a high degree of friction at the moment of inscription, and the broken and abraded condition of the exemplars combine to render palaeographic analysis an undertaking advisable for only the stoutest of heart.[46] With all due allowance for the decidedly tentative quality of any judgements, just four hands each of which has written more than one slate can be identified, yielding a minimum number of 158 writers in the corpus, not even counting slates with multiple hands or autograph signatures.[47] To think of these writers as "scribes" would be otiose. Such a total must reflect *ad hoc* literacy—basic, individual—on the part of those who kept notes and records, managed land, engaged in business, looked to the law, taught, learned, and prayed; most hands, with but one text each surviving to their credit, look no less practised for it.[48] Charter subscriptions too demonstrate a similar degree of comfort with writing amongst not only granters and beneficiaries, but also witnesses or "secondary participants": in all, there are 31 autograph signatures on the 10 (tolerably) legible slates, with a range of accompanying formulae directly comparable to the handful of parchment charters preserved from the period.[49] And in one document recording the terms of a sworn oath, the six presiding judicial figures appended their own subscriptions: in doing so they

45 R. Collins, *Visigothic Spain, 409–711* (Oxford: 2004), 170–73; I. Velázquez Soriano, "Ardesie scritte di epoca visigota: nuove prospettive sulla cultura e la scrittura," in *Die Privaturkunden der Karolingerzeit*, eds. P. Erhart, K. Heidecker, and B. Zeller (Dietikon: 2009), 31–45. For translation of one example see J.N. Adams, *An Anthology of Informal Latin, 200 BC-AD 900: Fifty Texts with Translations and Linguistic Commentary* (Cambridge: 2016), 46.

46 J.M. Ruiz Asencio, "En torno a la escritura de las pizarras visigodas," in *Centenario de la Cátedra de Epigrafía y Numismática. Universidad Complutense de Madrid, 1900/01–2000/01* (Madrid: 2001), 53–76.

47 *P.Vis.* 45.2 and 48, 71 and 82, 97–98, 129–31; I. Velázquez Soriano, *Documentos de época visigoda escritos en pizarra* (*siglos VI–VIII*), 2 vols (Turnhout: 2000), 2:25.

48 J.M. Ruiz Asencio, "Nuevos hallazgos de documentos visigodos en pizarra," *Archivos Leoneses* 47 (1993), 10–11, 13–14, 17–25, 29–32; Ruiz Asencio, "La escritura," 198–202; Velázquez Soriano, "La cultura," 193–95.

49 *P.Vis.* 12, 15, 39, 40.3, 42, 44, 92, 121–22, 126; A. Bruckner and R. Marichal, *Chartae Latinae Antiquiores*, vol. 46 (Dietikon-Zurich: 1995), 1398, 1400–02; A.M. Mundó, "Pizarra visigoda de la época de Khindasvinto (642–649)," in *Festschrift Bernard Bischoff zu seinem 65. Geburtstag*, eds. J. Autenrieth and F. Brunhölzl (Stuttgart: 1971), 85; Velázquez Soriano, *Documentos*, 2:48–50, 62–65.

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complied with Visigothic legislation, which required autographs of them in such contexts.[50] Instruction in the basics of literacy cannot have been rare; there are just three instances of a witness leaving a cross in lieu of a signature, and even so this counted legally to validate a contract, the same as one could either read the text oneself or else hear it read aloud before validating it.[51] Clearly there was a sizeable literate population on the rural northern Meseta, but it was a subset of a larger group for whom written modes, at some remove, were an ordinary aspect of living and interacting.

How do we account for the lack of corresponding evidence, be it textual or material, of episcopal, monastic, or other ecclesiastical school structures?[52] The "institutional approach" to literacy, focussing on formal venues of education, is something of a false start, in that there are always other ways and means of teaching, particularly when practical rather than specialised knowledge is involved.[53] Think of the types of writing on the slates: locals hardly needed the guidance of bishops assembled in pomp at Toledo to appreciate the utility of acquiring skills embedded in the pragmatics of daily life.[54] We simply want a mechanism for their dissemination. Conveniently enough, from the adjacent Bierzo, the idiosyncratic autobiographical writings of Valerius (*fl. c.*700)—a "crazed ascetic," "sour, self-righteous, ungrateful, and paranoid," or "a monk with an attractive personality" but "a tormented mind," depending on whom you ask—sketch for us a picture of how rural education operated without school walls.[55] We find him in the fastness of his mountaintop hermitage, where he "was rearing a certain child of good parents, and had composed a special booklet for his instruction"; as payment he asked only for some clothing. Absent any indication that the boy was bound for the clergy, this describes a barter economy in which Valerius, for the necessities to sustain his cantankerous solitude, supplied the teaching sought by rural folk, and not only those

50 *P.Vis.* 39; *LV* 2.1.25, 5.2.7; cf. Á. d'Ors, ed., *El código de Eurico: edición, palingenesia, índices* (Madrid: 1960), 307; M.C. Díaz y Díaz, "Un document privé de l'Espagne wisigothique sur ardoise," *Studi Medievali* 1 (1960), 63.

51 *P.Vis.* 8, 19, 41; *LV* 2.3.3, 2.5.1, 2.5.3; King, *Law*, 104–05.

52 But see I. Martín Viso, "Huellas del poder: pizarras y poblados campesinos en el centro de la Península Ibérica (siglos V–VII)," *Medievalismo* 25 (2015), 285–314.

53 F.N. Akinnaso, "Schooling, Language, and Knowledge in Literate and Nonliterate Societies," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 34 (1992), esp. 78–82; cf. S. Scribner and M. Cole, *The Psychology of Literacy* (Cambridge, Mass.: 1981), 113–33.

54 See J. Goody, *The Domestication of the Savage Mind* (Cambridge: 1977), 74–111.

55 Wickham, *Framing*, 223; C. Wickham, *The Inheritance of Rome: A History of Europe from 400 to 1000* (London: 2009), 170; Riché, *Education*, 359, 360; F.J. Udaondo Puerto, "El sistema escolar en la Hispania visigoda: el ejemplo de Valerio del Bierzo," *Helmantica* 54 (2003), 391–445.

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"of good parents": "yes, in the calm season, many young lads used to arrive, who likewise bound themselves over to my tutelage," remaining until the school year ended with the onset of winter.[56] On another occasion, when our hermit "was introducing a young pupil to letters," he specifically followed a curriculum of reading, memorising, and reciting "the whole Psalter together with the canticles," while he also compiled copies of liturgical texts himself, intending them for study as well as use, all practices tallying neatly with the slates.[57]

The find-sites of the *pizarras* imply that teaching and learning took place on the ground, far from the city and the school, on the estates and in the villages where the peasantry worked and lived. At one point Valerius exchanged his own bad-tempered, ill-mannered company for residence in a church on the property of a sympathetic landowner, and notwithstanding the predictable falling-out (ending, to his evident satisfaction, in the death of his erstwhile patron) we can begin on this basis to reconstruct a rural education system staffed by itinerant literates, agents of capillary diffusion who enabled the *rustici* to attain what literacy they needed via informal person-to-person exchange.[58] And not only the basics: besides his Scriptural and liturgical reading, the troubled holy man of the Bierzo had a working familiarity with Visigothic law, drawing on it to structure and inform his misery memoirs; this makes him a possible conduit too for the knowledge of legal norms evident in the slate charters.[59] The point is that such figures, anonymous in the main and integrated into local society, were marketing a set of skills in demand, responding to a rural population habituated to the employment of writing (and counting) in day-to-day life. Together the humble slates and these all but unknown teachers are the bridge from the Roman world to the age of Isidore, spanning the intervening chasm of higher literature and laying a broad foundation for Visigothic letters. At the Swiss monastery of Sankt Gallen, the monks provided literate services to surrounding lay communities accustomed since time out of mind to doing business in writing; so too was literacy in early medieval Iberia a point of contact between the clergy and the laity.[60] When we try to make

56 Valerius of Bierzo, *Replicatio*, 6, 9.

57 Valerius of Bierzo, *Replicatio*, 11 (cf. 22); see also his *Ordo querimoniae*, 6, and *Residuum*, 2.

58 Valerius of Bierzo, *Ordo querimoniae*, 10.

59 R. Collins, "The 'Autobiographical' Works of Valerius of Bierzo: their Structure and Purpose," reprinted in *Law, Culture*, 432–35; Y. García López, *Estudios críticos y literarios de la "Lex Wisigothorum"* (Alcalá de Henares: 1996), 30–31.

60 R. McKitterick, *The Carolingians and the Written Word* (Cambridge: 1989), 77–134; R. McKitterick, ed., *The Uses of Literacy in Early Mediaeval Europe* (Cambridge: 1990), 328–32.

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sense of Isidore, we must fix our eyes on this horizon of expectation and education, an unbroken link with the antiquity which he sought through his work not to contact or rescue but rather to condense and reframe.

2. The Quiet Sevillano

Who, then, was Isidore, and what was he for? Like the many "mute and reticent graves" confronting Prudentius abroad in the catacombs of Rome, a private silence stymies enquiry into the man and his motives.[61] This obtains even in his correspondence, the special genre which can so easily beguile us into believing that we really know the author despite the constant interplay between personal testament and public performance.[62] The great man of letters, in point of fact, wrote very few, that is to say, only a dozen survive: six addressed to Braulio of Zaragoza—one of them also "re-gifted" to Sisebut—and a seventh to Bishop Helladius of Toledo. The other five are generally considered doubtful or spurious, if not for equally sound reasons: one each to Eugenius I of Toledo, Masona of Merida, and Leudefredus of Cordoba, bishops all; one to Claudius, *dux* of Lusitania; and one to Redemptus, the deacon who subsequently sat Isidore's death watch.[63] This modest haul is by no means confessional, but it is characterised by three abiding themes, of friendship maintained, books shared, and infirmity endured. While each in its own way is a common epistolary conceit, we may in the silhouette of the man projected just make out the form obscured. When the end came, Redemptus described "a body wearied by persistent sickness," whose "compromised stomach rejected food": Isidore rallied, however, to receive the sacrament of penance, and after primly dispersing the "hordes of women" closing in on his position made a final confession and took communion, dying in his cell four days later.[64] The model of Martin of Tours lurks in the background of this account, which also draws freely on Isidorian

61 D.E. Trout, "Damasus and the Invention of Early Christian Rome," *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 33 (2003), 527.

62 R. Gibson, "On the Nature of Ancient Letter Collections," *Journal of Roman Studies* 102 (2012), 56–58; cf. Séjourné, *Le dernier père*, 71–81.

63 J.C. Martín, "Isidorus Hispalensis ep., 12. Epistulae," in *La trasmissione dei testi latini del Medioevo. Mediaeval Latin Texts and their Transmission*, vol. 2, eds. P. Chiesa and L. Castaldi (Florence: 2005), 387–96; R. Miguel Franco and J.C. Martín-Iglesias, eds., *Braulionis Caesaraugustani Epistulae*, CCSL 114B (Turnhout: 2018), 9*-56*.

64 Redemptus of Seville, *Obitus beatissimi Isidori Hispalensis episcopi* 2.

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writings and the liturgy, yet insofar as it speaks to a recurrent complaint of his letters, one is tempted to accord it some credence.[65]

The persona of Isidore, whether public or private, is most clearly delineated in his exchanges with Braulio. The earliest two letters of the set date to roughly 619–21 and tell a conventional story of absent comrades checking in on each other as they swap reading material.[66] In the first, Isidore plays etymologically on their shared spirit (*animus*) and friendship (*amicitia*) by enclosing, actually or metaphorically, a ring (*annulus*) and a cloak (*amictus*); he also attaches a "quaternion of rules," normally assumed to be his own *Rule for Monks* but fitting the description of any of the collections of mixed monastic handbooks by then in common circulation.[67] In the second letter, Isidore reiterates a request made previously *viva voce* for "the sixth decade of Saint Augustine," referring to part of the *Exposition of the Psalms*, and sends what he calls a *Booklet* (*Libellus*) *of Synonyms*, again possibly but not positively his own work of that name, before asking Braulio to pray for his "infirmities of the flesh and failure of mind."[68] Such professions of inadequacy to the task are a *topos* of the humility mode in contemporary epistolary (and literary) discourse, though more usually limited to alleged mental shortcomings. Physical handicap brings to mind "grim Eugenius"(II) of Toledo and his "auto-epitaph" lamentations, but also Asser and his portrait of Alfred, the Anglo-Saxon king for whom suffering sickness was the crux of his *mimesis* of Job, spiritual self-fashioning as a ruler of pious patience.[69] Are these confessed frailties deployed to invite similar interpretation from the reader, or were they a reality of Isidore's life?

65 G. Kampers, "Exemplarisches Sterben. Der *Obitus beatissimi Isidori Hispalensis episcopi* des Klerikers Redemptus," in *Nomen et Fraternitas. Festschrift für Dieter Geuenich zum 65. Geburtstag*, eds. U. Ludwig and T. Schilp (Berlin: 2008), 236–48.

66 See I.N. Wood, "Family and Friendship in the West," in *The Cambridge Ancient History, XIV. Late Antiquity: Empire and Successors, AD 425–600*, eds. A. Cameron, B. Ward-Perkins, and M. Whitby (Cambridge: 2001), 434–36; I.N. Wood, "Latin," in *A Companion to Late Antique Literature*, eds. S. McGill and E.J. Watts (New York: 2018), 34–36.

67 Miguel Franco and Martín-Iglesias, *Braulionis Caesaraugustani Epistulae*, A; I. Velázquez Soriano, "Reflexiones en torno a la formación de un *Corpus regularum* de época visigoda," *Antigüedad y Cristianismo* 23 (2006), 542–54; cf. J.T. Welsh, "Cato, Plautus, and the Metaphorical Use of *Anulus*," *Phoenix* 60 (2006), 133–39, for a rather startlingly different implication.

68 Miguel Franco and Martín-Iglesias, *Braulionis Caesaraugustani Epistulae*, B.

69 A.T. Fear, "Moaning to Some Purpose: The Laments of Eugenius II," in *Early Medieval Spain: A Symposium*, eds. A. Deyermond and M.J. Ryan (London: 2010), 55–77; D. Pratt, "The Illnesses of King Alfred the Great," *Anglo-Saxon England* 30 (2001), 81–90; P. Kershaw, "Illness, Power, and Prayer in Asser's *Life of King Alfred*," *Early Medieval Europe* 10 (2001), 217–24.

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Alongside friendship maintained from afar, the motif of bodily incapacity recurs in the later correspondence, a trio of letters dating to 632/633. The first is more in the line of *opera buffa*: Isidore had just taken delivery of a note from Braulio when, summoned by the king as a matter of the utmost moment, he was forced to leave it with a servant; returning from the palace, he could locate neither the letter nor any of his other papers, leaving him no alternative but to ask his pen pal to get back in touch.[70] Seemingly a shameless name-dropper, Isidore reveals in his next missive that he is back in the majestic presence to preside at the Fourth Council of Toledo. *En route*, he had posted Braulio an unemended (*inemendatum*) copy of his *Etymologies*, amongst other codices, for emendation (*ad emendandum*), unable to do so himself "because of indisposition"; in closing he adds that he has no news to relay about the turbulent bishop of Tarragona, reportedly involved in some ongoing sensation.[71] The third letter, addressed to either Braulio or Sisebut, was perhaps initially sent to the king, then repurposed after his death: it encloses a work (*opus*) "on the origin of certain things"—the *Etymologies* again in some version—"compiled from the recollection (*recordatione*) of old reading" and partially annotated.[72] What are we to make of the primacy accorded here to memory? It is distinctly unsettling in an encyclopaedist, whether or not he had index cards to fall back on in his research, and resembles the prefatory remark of another great gatherer and transmitter of sources, the Algerian intellectual al-Maqqarī (d. 1632): "we had nothing to assist us in our gigantic undertaking but what little still remained impressed on our mind and memory…."[73] Is it a key to their shared methodology, or a *caveat lector* about the degree of fallibility to expect from the result of so great a labour? Isidore wrote to his distant friend and correspondent for the last time in 636, if one accepts the text as topical rather than generic, asking to see him once more before his death, or else in the life to come, and begging for Braulio's prayers in his autograph valediction.[74]

These six brief and diffident communications stand in sharp contrast to the five *dubia et spuria*, broadly more forthcoming the more certainly apocryphal. Isidore's letter to Eugenius has been judged suspicious on fairly flimsy grounds: some manuscripts identify the addressee as bishop of Toledo, and

70 Miguel Franco and Martín-Iglesias, *Braulionis Caesaraugustani Epistulae*, III.

71 Miguel Franco and Martín-Iglesias, *Braulionis Caesaraugustani Epistulae*, V; cf. *Epistulae Visigothicae*, 6, for further on this case.

72 Miguel Franco and Martín-Iglesias, *Braulionis Caesaraugustani Epistulae*, En tibi.

73 Al-Maqqarī, *The History of the Mohammedan Dynasties in Spain*, P. de Gayangos, ed. and trans., 2 vols (London: 1840–41), 1:11; Fontaine, *Isidore de Séville et la culture classique*, 2:763–84.

74 Miguel Franco and Martín-Iglesias, *Braulionis Caesaraugustani Epistulae*, I.

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this Eugenius (I) was not consecrated until late February or early March 636, by which time Isidore had only a month to live (he died on 4 April).[75] I cannot see why he need therefore have given up on his inbox. Nor do the contents read as the work of a wily forger: in response to a query, Isidore clarifies that Peter has precedence over the other Apostles, deplores the Acephalite heresy in no uncertain terms, and reminds Eugenius that subscription to the Trinity is not an optional element of Christian faith.[76] The letter to Masona is considerably longer, and its stated date of 605/606 ("in the third year of the reign of our most glorious lord Witteric") has been taken as the sign of a forgery from later in the Visigothic period (his episcopate, and his life, concluded *c*.600), seeking to establish the superiority of Toledo over Merida. If so, obliquely; the text considers the honour of the repentant sinner, and vindicates the opinion of the Council of Ancyra (314) with Scriptural citations.[77] In a similar vein is the letter to Leudefredus, thought to be a product of cunning later 7th- or 8th-century Iberian priestcraft. What it amounts to is a (reasonably) brief dissertation on ecclesiastical offices and their duties, making appeal to the authority of both logic and antiquity, while drawing out the qualities expected of an abbot.[78] Great issues here, too, are not obviously at stake, but one can see why subsequent arrangements might handily be legitimised through retrospective ascription to the venerable *padre*. Quite a different matter is the letter to Claudius, addressing papal and episcopal powers, the Credo, and the need for caution with heretics, patently a forgery of the 9th century, the age of Pseudo-Isidore (no relation); the last, to Redemptus, on liturgical differences between West and East, with a postscript praising the Bible over the rules of grammarians, belongs to the debates of the 11th or 12th.[79] Both are entirely out of keeping with the terse observations of the authentic correspondence.

75 M.C. Díaz y Díaz, ed., *Isidoriana. Colección de estudios sobre Isidoro de Sevilla, publicados con ocasión del XIV Centenario de su nacimiento* (León: 1961), 7, notes that "a series of unfortunate circumstances for Spain" deprived the saint of worthy commemoration in 1936.

76 G.B. Ford, trans., *The Letters of Isidore of Seville*, 2nd ed. (Amsterdam: 1970), 46–49.

77 Ford, *The Letters*, 22–27, at 26; R.E. Reynolds, "The 'Isidorian' *Epistula ad Massonam* on Lapsed Clerics: Notes on its Early Manuscript and Textual Transmission," reprinted in *Studies on Medieval Liturgical and Legal Manuscripts from Spain and Southern Italy* (Farnham: 2009), 77–92.

78 R.E. Reynolds, "The 'Isidorian' *Epistula ad Leudefredum*: An Early Medieval Epitome of the Clerical Duties," reprinted in *Clerical Orders in the Early Middle Ages: Duties and Ordination* (Aldershot: 1999), 260–62; cf. R.E. Reynolds, "The 'Isidorian' *Epistula ad Leudefredum*: Its Origins, Early Manuscript Tradition, and Editions," in *Visigothic Spain: New Approaches*, ed. E. James (Oxford: 1980), 269–72.

79 Ford, *The Letters*, 30–37, 38–45; though see now S.C. Smith, "The Insertion of the *Filioque* into the Nicene Creed and a Letter of Isidore of Seville," *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 22 (2014), 261–86.

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What little Isidore reveals of himself contains contradictions: a man battling disease for well over a decade to press on with his reading and writing; a man of affairs who drops everything to hit the road from Seville to Toledo and take his place at the king's right hand. The cottage industry of scholarship on his historical works settled long ago on a political interpretation, that he was brokering a *traditio legis* from Rome to the Catholic kingdom of the Visigoths, and this picture of a party academician has come to define Isidore in the round.[80] The problem is that, beyond what we have so far reviewed, there is virtually no evidence of his purported activism. He is a background presence at the Second Council of Seville in 619 and the Fourth Council of Toledo, the two fully documented meetings at which he was senior presiding prelate: no doubt one may trace his influence in the theological learning, concern for organisation and systematisation, and philosophy of Church and crown in cooperation present in the proceedings, but not through any overt, first-person intervention—Isidore remains, like all the other bishops, hidden behind the collective conciliar façade.[81] In this vacuum, something of a hybrid image has taken shape, the *siglo de oro* portrait painted by El Greco, austere and aloof, desiccated, the Grand Inquisitor of *Don Carlo* (Act 4, Scene 1), shuffling forth to insinuate policy into the sovereign ear, the negative to the positive of his extrovert brother Leander booming baptismal *bons mots* for the ages in 589.[82] Only one letter of Isidore, the seventh and last generally reckoned authentic (despite a late manuscript transmission), has him explicitly engaged with the world around him, discharging his pastoral responsibilities in the 620s or thereabouts. In clear and concise language, he asks Helladius "and the other prelates who are gathered with him" to depose the bishop of Cordoba, formerly a priest in Seville, for committing carnal sin, so that penitence in this life may earn forgiveness in the next.[83] Brief, and to the point. Silence may deceive, but it is past time at least to reappraise the quiet Isidore, alter ego to the politician and ideologue of our imagining. Whether we take his talk of malaise and memory as real or rhetorical struggle, by his own admission he was dedicated to his scholarly work before all else.

80 See J. Wood, *The Politics of Identity in Visigothic Spain: Religion and Power in the Histories of Isidore of Seville* (Leiden: 2012), 133–90, for the most careful treatment of this theme.

81 II Seville (J. Vives, ed., *Concilios visigóticos e hispano-romanos* [Barcelona-Madrid: 1963], 163–85), subscriptiones; IV Toledo 5, subscriptiones, 1.

82 III Toledo (ed. *CCH* 5, 49–159), homilia in laudem Ecclesiae.

83 See W. Gundlach, "Epistolae Wisigoticae," in *Epistolae Merowingici et Karolini Aevi* 1, ed. E. Dümmler, *MGH Epistolae* 3 (Berlin: 1892), 658–90.

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3. The Imperfectionist

Reserved and taciturn, Isidore had these further attributes: an inclination to revise and recraft his works continually, and a tendency to defer, cloaking and re-cloaking his own opinions in the authority of his stated sources, the secret security of the past. Even when he seems explicitly to be telling us something current and crucial—say, opining on the pronunciation of a word in his own day—he as often turns out to be channelling some fact or view culled from his omnivorous reading.[84] The point of departure for assessing the method behind the man is his *catalogue raisonné*: in life, Isidore had continued the index of Christian authors known generically as *On Illustrious Men*, and in death Braulio prepared a *Listing* (*Renotatio*) *of the Books of Isidore* by way of an appendix, enumerating and briefly describing "those works which have come to my attention." After heartily endorsing the eloquence and erudition of his subject, he presents 17 titles in all, crowned by the *Etymologies*, wherein "nearly everything which one ought to know" can be found; concluding in rapture on Isidore's articulacy and learning, he salutes his stewardship of the Second Council of Seville for definitively confuting the Acephalites, an argument in favour, perhaps, of the letter to Masona.[85] Much of the industrial output of Isidorian scholarship has sought to harness this review as a tool for identifying and interpreting his surviving *œuvres*, though disagreement remains over whether the treatises *On Numbers* and *On Heresies* latterly edited and published under his name are genuinely those cited here.[86] The order of presentation has even been mobilised as a sequential guide to relative date of composition—controversially so (and almost certainly without merit).[87] But the most interesting point is the one least often made. The *Listing* offers poor

84 J. Elfassi, "*Nam benevolentia absurdum sonat* (Isidore de Séville, *Etym.* x, 26): une question de prononciation?," *Eruditio Antiqua* 5 (2013), 47–54; cf. M. Banniard, *Viva voce. Communication écrite et communication orale du IVe au IXe siècle en Occident latin* (Paris: 1992), esp. 235–47; I. Velázquez Soriano, *Latine dicitur, vulgo vocant. Aspectos de la lengua escrita y hablada en las obras gramaticales de Isidoro de Sevilla* (Logroño: 2003), 196–215.

85 Braulio of Zaragoza, *Renotatio librorum domini Isidori*, 200, 204.

86 Isidore, *Liber numerorum*, viii-xiv; Isidore, *De haeresibus*: 139–60; J.C. Martín, "Isidorus Hispalensis ep., 14. Traités d'authenticité incertaine," in Chiesa and Castaldi, *La trasmissione dei testi*, 2:407–17.

87 J.A. de Aldama, "Indicaciones sobre la cronología de las obras de S. Isidoro," in *Miscellanea Isidoriana. Homenaje a S. Isidoro de Sevilla en el XIII Centenario de su muerte, 636–4 de abril 1936* (Rome: 1936), 57–89; J.C. Martín, *La Renotatio librorum domini Isidori de Braulio de Zaragoza* (*†651*). *Introducción, edición crítica y traducción* (Logroño: 2002), 74–84.

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guidance in regard to the salient textual feature of Isidore's various works: the multiple extant versions attributable to their author.[88]

Letters, as before, provide a way in. The correspondence between the two bishops is transmitted together with the *Etymologies*, prefixed as if in lieu of the absent preface.[89] Of the pair of letters sent by Braulio, the earlier (625/626) entreats Isidore for the book (*liber*) by that title, which he had asked him to write and has heard is now complete, as well as for the proceedings of a council condemning Sintharius, "cooked to well done by the white heat of your interrogation."[90] The later (632/633), however, notes that seven years have elapsed since he placed his order for the books (*libri*) of *Origins*, a new title; in the meantime, he has been fobbed off with diverse and subtle delays, claims that they are unfinished, even unwritten, that his letter got lost in the mail. Increasingly desperate, Braulio demands his advance copy, reading Isidore the Riot Act for depriving him of love and friendship. At last, the jabbing finger: he has learned that many others are already in possession of the books (*libri*) of *Etymologies*, albeit "mutilated and chewed up"; he longs, how he longs, to hold them in his hands, but preferably "transcribed completely, emended, and properly integrated."[91] These earnest, if embarrassing, missives are the first sign that the great dictionary-encyclopaedia may have been composed and circulated not in continuous fascicles so much as in a number of distinct volumes, and that Isidore only conceived the idea of uniting them at a late stage in their production. As Braulio himself records, when the text *in toto* was finally entrusted to him for revision and dissemination, it was he who divided it into the twenty books of its present form.[92]

This editorial intervention bound together materials with separate geneses and purposes: Isidore's own *Etymologies* were not as we have them.[93] How, then? Beginning at the beginning, the first three books define the seven liberal arts, a manual not unlike the *Secular Institutes* of Cassiodorus, with an additional

88 See M.A. Andrés, J. Elfassi, and J.C. Martín, eds., *L'édition critique des œuvres d'Isidore de Séville. Les recensions multiples* (Paris: 2008).

89 R. Miguel Franco, "Posición y relaciones de las epístolas de Braulio de Zaragoza en las *Etymologiae* de Isidoro de Sevilla," in *Munus quaesitum meritis. Homenaje a Carmen Codoñer*, eds. G. Hinojo Andrés and J.C. Fernández Corte (Salamanca: 2007), 607–16; R. Miguel Franco, "Tópicos de los prólogos en las cartas introductorias a las *Etymologiae* de Isidoro de Sevilla," *Acme* 67 (2014), 109–32.

90 Miguel Franco and Martín-Iglesias, *Braulionis Caesaraugustani Epistulae*, II.

91 Miguel Franco and Martín-Iglesias, *Braulionis Caesaraugustani Epistulae*, IV.

92 Braulio of Zaragoza, *Renotatio*, 203–04.

93 See C. Codoñer, "Isidorus Hispalensis ep., 1. Etymologiae," in Chiesa and Castaldi, *La trasmissione dei testi*, 2:274–99, now the point of departure for any consideration of this text.

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book on medicine.[94] Book five profiles civic and religious life by way of law, history, the Bible, canon law, and liturgical practice; books six through ten build on this foundation, discussing the Christian community in the form of God and his ministers, the structure of the Church and the nature of other religions, society and the family, and individuals and the labels for them. What now constitute books one to ten, in other words, offer the reader first an intellectual preparation, then a guide to the notional components of life, and in conclusion concrete information for participating in it, the balance firmly in favour of a Christian orientation. The second half of the *Etymologies* is a more straightforward gazetteer of the physical features of the world: man and animals, the four elements, geography, cities and buildings, precious stones and produce, social systems, and objects public and domestic. What accounts for this disjuncture of content and style? Book five closes with a brief chronicle of the six ages of man, conventionally called the *Lesser Chronicle*, and the manuscripts transmit its final entry in three versions, dating respectively to 623, 627, and 637.[95] This transparently suggests successive recensions, the third and last from a year after the death of Isidore, plausibly part of the editorial "completion" by Braulio; as is implicit in the earlier and explicit in the later of his pleading letters, copies of the text(s) seem to have circulated widely at the various stages of revision from quite early on. Importantly, book ten also has two overlapping prefaces, the second an elaboration of the first. The first is more bridging in nature ("we have inserted a certain number [of etymologies] in this work for the sake of learning"), and we may take it as introducing the final section of an initial ten-book format of the "whole" text, conceivably inscribed to Sisebut with that letter later reused for Braulio.[96] Assembled out of independent blocs, some of which circulated on their own (such as books five and perhaps ten), it was finished around 625/626, when Braulio first wrote enquiring after it. Isidore thereafter developed plans to expand his work, and composed or compiled what has become its second half, books eleven to twenty, in the years up to 632/633, when Braulio got wind of its availability (to others).

For Isidore the creative process was iterative and recursive: frequent dissemination of drafts amongst his peers, even if not always to his biggest fan,

94 Cassiodorus, *Institutions of Divine and Secular Learning and On the Soul*, J.W. Halporn and M. Vessey, trans. (Liverpool: 2004), 64–79; E. Montero Cartelle, "La medicina y las Artes liberales según Isidoro de Sevilla," in *Isidorus medicus. Isidoro de Sevilla y los textos de medicina*, ed. A. Ferraces-Rodríguez (A Coruña: 2005), 227–42.

95 Isidore, *Etymologiae* 5.39.42.

96 Isidore, *Etymologiae* 10.1; C. Codoñer, *Introducción al Libro x de las Etymologiae. Su lugar dentro de esta obra, su valor como diccionario* (Logroño: 2002), 12–27; cf. Miguel Franco and Martín-Iglesias, *Braulionis Caesaraugustani Epistulae*, *34–*41.

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and regular revision or wholesale reconception. These practices are most clearly in evidence with his *Greater Chronicle* and *Histories of the Goths, Vandals, and Sueves*. The fearsome transmission of the former, in its full complexity, "cannot be mastered—can scarcely be approached—without an effort," but it is basically reducible to two versions, according to the date of the last entry: one in 615/616, during the reign of Sisebut, the other in 626, under Suinthila, a longer recension with new notices as well as deletions and modifications.[97] Isidore must have returned to update his earlier work for the new regime, as Suinthila, enterprisingly, had suppressed the son and successor of Sisebut to mount the Toledan throne. Yet there is also an intermediate family of manuscripts with features of both versions: he seems to have produced and circulated copies at various stages of composition, and indeed reused one such recension as the *Lesser Chronicle* in book five of the *Etymologies* (this too, as above, he rewrote).[98] The *Histories* have a similar story. Based once again on the final entry in the surviving manuscripts, we can identify two successive versions of the text: Isidore completed the first in 621, then dusted it off in 626, prosecuting "Our Peninsular Story" further in time and adding a laudatory preface and conclusion to celebrate the glorious expulsion of the east Romans.[99] He may also have bundled this second edition together with his *Greater Chronicle*, though copyists subsequently (and forgivably) jumbled up the different recensions. Heroic work disentangling the transmission has likewise brought to light a transitional form of the *Histories*, put in circulation from the scriptorium of Isidore himself before he had finalised his editorial interventions, and to be found in the same manuscripts as the intermediate *Greater Chronicle*, implying that he was amending the two texts in tandem.[100] The

97 W. Stubbs, *The Constitutional History of England in its Origin and Development*, 3 vols (Oxford: 1874–78), 1: iii; Isidore, *Chronica*, 1.417, 2.417ª; J.C. Martín, "Le problème des recensions multiples dans la *Chronique* d'Isidore de Séville," in Andrés et al., *L'édition critique*, 127–51; J.C. Martín, "Isidorus Hispalensis ep., 9. Chronica," in Chiesa and Castaldi, *La trasmissione dei testi*, 2:362–70.

98 But see now C. Codoñer, "El 'De descriptione temporum' de las 'Etymologiae' (5,39) dentro de la transmisión manuscrita de la 'Chronica,'" *Filologia Mediolatina* 20 (2013), 217–54.

99 Isidore, *Historiae*, 61, 65 (see also De laude Spaniae, 168–171; Recapitulatio, 66–70); I. Velázquez Soriano, "La doble redacción de la *Historia Gothorum* de Isidoro de Sevilla," in Andrés et al., *L'édition critique*, 91–126.

100 J.C. Martín, "Isidorus Hispalensis ep., 10. De origine Getarum, Vandalorum, Sueborum," in Chiesa and Castaldi, *La trasmissione dei testi*, 2:370–79; J.C. Martín, "Réflexions sur la tradition manuscrite de trois oeuvres d'Isidore de Séville: le *De natura rerum*, la *Regula monachorum* et le *De origine Getarum, Vandalorum, Sueborum*," *Filologia Mediolatina* 11 (2004), 244–63.

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remarkable tradition of his historical writings unmistakeably conjures a particular Isidore, pen constantly in hand, revising his work to ensure that it remained current in content and outlook.

Maybe we should expect this in the production of something so massive as the *Etymologies*, and so sensitive as chronicling the political vicissitudes of the day. But the same iteration and recursion are apparent in his other more modest, less topical efforts. Consider the *Synonyms*, an essay in the language of spiritual contemplation: it is transmitted in two major families of manuscripts with differences sufficient to reconstruct two recensions, notably a pair of contrasting prologues (one posthumous: "Isidore of holy remembrance") in addition to the prefatory letter.[101] While the text as a unity has variously been dated to post-595, *c*.604–12, and 631, a plausible scenario building on what we have seen is that Isidore shared a first draft with Braulio (enclosing it with his letter of 619–21), which became the basis of one surviving version, then edited his own working copy into the other at some point thereafter; the precise circumstances are still very much in debate.[102] Or take the *Allegories*, explanatory notices on the moral sense of the principal personages of the Bible perhaps for use by preachers, drawing on Patristic—especially Augustinian—citations.[103] We still lack a published critical edition, forcing us back to the volumes of the *Patrologia Latina* ("repellent though they are in appearance"), but preliminary study points strongly once more towards two recensions: here the modifications are comparatively slight, confined mainly to organisation; even so, only one branch of the manuscripts bears the cover letter to Orosius (surely Aurasius, bishop of Toledo?), in which Isidore "commended these [notes] to your judgement for correction," putting us back amidst circulating drafts and authorial proofs.[104] An exception to this pattern has in the past been found in the

101 Isidore, *Synonyma*, 1.1, 2, 3–4; J. Elfassi, "Isidorus Hispalensis ep., 4. Synonyma," in *La trasmissione dei testi latini del Medioevo. Medieval Latin Texts and their Transmission*, vol. 1, eds. P. Chiesa and L. Castaldi (Florence: 2004), 218–26; J. Elfassi, "Les deux recensions des *Synonyma*," in Andrés et al., *L'édition critique*, 153–84.

102 J.C. Martín, review of: J. Elfassi, *Isidori Hispalensis episcopi Synonyma*, in *Archivum Latinitatis Medii Aevi* 68 (2010), 368–71; J. Elfassi, "Une nouvelle hypothèse sur les deux recensions des *Synonyma* d'Isidore de Séville: quelques remarques critiques," *Archivum Latinitatis Medii Aevi* 69 (2011), 179–201.

103 D. Poirel, "Un manuel d'exégèse spirituelle au service des prédicateurs: les *Allegoriae* d'Isidore de Séville," *Recherches Augustiniennes et Patristiques* 33 (2003), 95–107; J.C. Martín-Iglesias, "Las fuentes de las *Allegoriae quaedam sanctae scripturae* (CPL 1190) de Isidoro de Sevilla," *Euphrosyne* 46 (2018), 143–79.

104 R.W. Southern, *The Making of the Middle Ages* (New Haven: 1953), 259; Isidore, *Allegoriae*, 97–98; D. Poirel, "Isidorus Hispalensis ep., 1. Allegoriae," in Chiesa and Castaldi, *La trasmissione dei testi*, 1:196–201; D. Poirel, "*Quis quid ubi quibus auxiliis cur quomodo quando*. Les

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manual *On Ecclesiastical Offices*, a companion to the liturgy and hierarchy of the Church written at the request of Isidore's brother Fulgentius: its transmission seemed blissfully free of notable discrepancies.[105] Recent work, however, has flagged variants hitherto attributed to contamination, friend or foe to so many an editor, which may instead reflect stages of correction and revision.[106] This minor editorial activity is not on the scale of a new recension, but it does bring the text into line with general Isidorian practice, and may provide a context for its division into two books and arrangement into chapters.

Why write and rewrite? The shape of an answer can be glimpsed in the textual history of *On the Nature of Things*, an almanac prepared by Isidore with some encouragement from Sisebut and probably complete as of 612/613. The treatise is transmitted in three recensions: shorter, comprising 46 chapters; intermediate, appending what is now numbered chapter 48; and longer, incorporating chapter 44 as well as (for the most part) the so-called "mystical addition," which disappointingly just explicates how the day is "the image of the Law"; this last, if not Iberian in origin, may be a later contribution by Northumbrian *eruditi*.[107] The evidence admits of more than one interpretation, but Isidore most likely added chapter 48 himself, after reading book two of Pliny the Elder's *Natural History*, to emulate the ending of that rival forerunner with his own considered views "On the Parts of the Earth." This chapter also has many points of contact with book fourteen of the *Etymologies*, "On the Earth," suggesting that, a decade or so after finishing *On the Nature of Things*, he revisited it while engaged in his dictionary project.[108] We thereby begin to see Isidore in sharper relief: not only revising his current work as he learned of new sources, but also editing one text in light of material culled from research for another—an author continually emending, updating, and reconciling the whole corpus of his output, maintaining its consistency on the fly, not waiting for autumnal *retractationes*. In this connexion, it is worth contemplating his *Questions on the Old Testament*, an exegesis of the Pentateuch and the Histories

recensions multiples des *Allegoriae* d'Isidore de Séville," in Andrés et al., *L'édition critique*, 15–47; cf. L.A. García Moreno, *Prosopografía del reino visigodo de Toledo* (Salamanca: 1974), 244.

105 Isidore of Seville, *De ecclesiasticis officiis*, epistula ad Fulgentium.

106 M.A. Andrés, "Isidorus Hispalensis ep., 4. De ecclesiasticis officiis," in Chiesa and Castaldi, *La trasmissione dei testi*, 2:323–32; M. Gorman, "The Diagrams in the Oldest Manuscripts of Isidore's *De natura rerum* with a Note on the Manuscript Transmission of Isidore's Works," *Studi Medievali* 42 (2001), 529–45, at 537.

107 Isidore, *De natura rerum*, 1.3.

108 J.C. Martín, "Isidorus Hispalensis ep., 8. De natura rerum," in Chiesa and Castaldi, *La trasmissione dei testi*, 2:353–62; Martín, "Réflexions," 206–27; Isidore, *Etymologiae* 14, xxxv-xxxix; cf. Pliny the Elder, *Historia naturalis* 2.112–13 (242–48).

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thought to date from early in his publishing career.[109] The preface promises the reader comprehensive literal and allegorical analyses, agreeing with Braulio's description of the work as divided into two books, but the second is not identifiably extant, while in the first the much greater length of the initial five literal commentaries does make it look like Isidore simply lost interest in the rest; it is almost certainly unfinished. Yet there are alternatives to *ennui*: book two may survive (in summary form) as the *Allegories*, and he could still have been preparing the remainder of his planned essays at the time of his death.[110] Based on our knowledge of his working habits, what we have may be a series of drafts and outlines which he handed out to his colleagues, soliciting their comments and corrections—in future a complete critical edition should tell.

Textual flux is a hallmark of the entire Isidorian bibliography. At some point in the years between 612 and 614/615, he composed *On the Catholic Faith against the Jews*, offering robust refutation, "original in his formulations," of the errors of Judaism for the enlightenment of his sister Florentina.[111] Exploratory study of its transmission has revealed signal divergences amongst the few manuscripts collated: could they too reflect authorial revision? Isidore had first put *calamus* to parchment in the reign of Sisebut and the circumstance of his anti-Semitic activities; later and with political cover, he distanced himself from such initiatives in his edited *Histories*, and we may hope that here he was further developing his preference for persuasion over forced conversion, though his apparent actions at the much controverted "Third" Council of Seville (622–24?) do cast doubt on the moderation of his position.[112] Another question in this line arises with *On Differences*: the Isidorian tracts "On the

109 Isidore, *Quaestiones in Vetus Testamentum*.

110 Isidore, *Quaestiones in Vetus Testamentum*, *Genesis*, praefatio; Braulio of Zaragoza, *Renotatio*, 203; J. Elfassi, "Isidorus Hispalensis ep., 2. Quaestiones in Vetus Testamentum," in Chiesa and Castaldi, *La trasmissione dei testi*, 1:201–09.

111 Isidore, *De fide Catholica contra Iudaeos* 1, praefatio; M.A. Andrés, "Isidorus Hispalensis ep., 5. De fide Catholica contra Iudaeos," in Chiesa and Castaldi, *La trasmissione dei testi*, 2:333–38, at 333; W. Drews, *The Unknown Neighbour: The Jew in the Thought of Isidore of Seville* (Leiden: 2006), 33–136.

112 Isidore, *Historiae* 60; Drews, *The Unknown Neighbour*, 201–305; S.A. Feldman, "Isidoro de Sevilha e o rei Sisebuto: a conversão dos judeus no reino visigótico," *Brathair* 13 (2013), 97–115; cf. Isidore of Seville, *Chronica* 1–2, 416. See VIII Toledo (ed. *CCH* 5, 365–485), excerptum canonicum, 20 (and *CCH* 1, 318–22); J.C. Martín-Iglesias, "El *Iudicium inter Marcianum et Habentium episcopos* (a. 638): estudio, edición y traducción," *Habis* 49 (2018), 218–22; with J. Orlandis, "Tras la huella de un concilio isidoriano de Sevilla," *Anuario de Historia de la Iglesia* 4 (1995), 237–46; R.L. Stocking, "Martianus, Aventius, and Isidore: Provincial Councils in Seventh-Century Spain," *Early Medieval Europe* 6 (1997), 169–88; W. Drews, "Jews as Pagans? Polemical Definitions of Identity in Visigothic Spain," *Early Medieval Europe* 11 (2002), 189–207.

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Differences of Words" and "On the Differences of Things" are more often transmitted apart than together, and while Braulio catalogues them as comprising two books, summarised in a description drawn from the prologue to the former, Isidore may have written the latter first.[113] No early manuscripts preserve both books copied in what is now thought of as their "correct" order, and when copied together each has undergone noteworthy modification. Book one is the first surviving example of a genre, orthographic lexicography, in which synonyms and homonyms are stated, defined, and distinguished by phonetics, morphology, or semantics as appropriate. Isidore had arranged it thematically, but quite soon in its transmission it was alphabetised and expanded. Book two is much shorter and treats broadly spiritual content, from the mystery of the Trinity to the parts of the body, via grammatical distinctions. Similarly, the text was quickly revised and reorganised, with paragraphs and whole chapters added or excised, but none of this by Isidore, at least not for certain.[114] The manuscripts indicate that the two books initially circulated independently, and perhaps this reflects their composition: could it have been Braulio who combined them, even as he laid out the *Etymologies*, following the example of the author in packaging and repackaging his work?

The bishop of Zaragoza would not have been alone in interpreting his role as Isidore's literary executor expansively. While the sage of Seville has not quite achieved the distinction of certain recording artists in releasing more studio albums dead than alive, expansion *post mortem* has been the fate of much of his corpus, after his own example but also conceivably owing to its predominantly impersonal "reference" quality. Early in his career, Isidore compiled his *On Illustrious Men*, schematic profiles of Christian writers following on from Jerome and Gennadius, in 33 chapters: as above, this original subsequently acquired Braulio's catalogue for an appendix, and underwent a number of revisions, before being transformed into a second version of 46 chapters, complete with prologue, probably in Iberia at some point later in the 7th century.[115] One

113 Braulio of Zaragoza, *Renotatio librorum domini Isidori*, 200; Isidore, *Differentiae* 1, praefatio; Isidore, *Differentiae* 2.

114 C. Codoñer and M.A. Andrés, "Isidorus Hispalensis ep., 3. De differentiis libri duo," in Chiesa and Castaldi, *La trasmissione dei testi*, 2:307–22; C. Codoñer, "Historia del texto del Libro I des las *Differentiae* de Isidoro de Sevilla," *Revue d'Histoire des Textes* 14–15 (1984–85), 77–95; M.A. Andrés, "Relación y numeración de los tres libros de *Differentiae* atribuidos a Isidoro de Sevilla (*PL* 83)," *Revue d'Histoire des Textes* 30 (2000), 239–62, which also discusses a third specimen of this genre betimes ascribed to Isidore; see M.L. Uhlfelder, ed., *De proprietate sermonum vel rerum. A Study and Critical Edition of a Set of Verbal Distinctions* (Rome: 1954).

115 Isidore, *De viris illustribus*, 20–41, 87–128; C. Codoñer, "Isidorus Hispalensis ep., 2. De viris illustribus," in Chiesa and Castaldi, *La trasmissione dei testi*, 2:299–307; J.C. Martín, "Une

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can readily see why an authoritative bibliography defining a canon invited modification to taste. But something similar befell the *Sentences*: the key source for Christian political philosophy in Visigothic Iberia and the most copied of Isidore's works after the *Etymologies*, it gained a whole new fourth book, though not until long after its frustratingly uncertain date of composition.[116] Still more significant are the transformations of another youthful effort, *On the Birth and Death of the Fathers*, succinct biographical notices (birth, life, death, burial) of the stars of sacred history. The text survives as both a single unit and divided piecemeal, offering introductions to individual books of the Bible, but only the coherent format is definitely Isidorian; here too chapters were added steadily over time to redress gaps in coverage—the Lesser Prophets to name one shocking omission—while the content was updated to suit new understandings of Scripture.[117] Perhaps from conception, or else very soon in its transmission, the work was assembled into a kind of Sunday School primer together with the *Allegories* and the *Prefaces*, the last a set of forty summaries and brief comments on the authorship and reception of biblical books. Like its partner, it too was carved up and distributed as introductory material; first steps towards a much-needed modern edition have revealed several stages of post-Isidorian tinkering, the addition of new content, and a systematic revision of the entire opus which may emanate from the Carolingian court.[118]

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nouvelle édition critique de la 'Vita Desiderii' de Sisebut, accompagnée de quelques réflexions concernant la date des 'Sententiae' et du 'De uiris illustribus' d'Isidore de Séville," *Hagiographica* 7 (2000), 134–45; F. Dolbeau, "Une refonte wisigothique du *De viris illustribus* d'Isidore," in *De Tertullien aux Mozarabes. Mélanges offerts à Jacques Fontaine, à l'occasion de son 70e anniversaire, par ses élèves, amis et collègues*, eds. L. Holtz, J.-C. Fredouille, and M.-H. Jullien, 3 vols (Paris: 1992), 2:41–56. For the later expanded version see G. von Działowski, *Isidor und Ildefons als Litterarhistoriker. Eine quellenkritische Untersuchung der Schriften "De viris illustribus" des Isidor von Sevilla und des Ildefons von Toledo* (Münster: 1898), 1–123.

116 Isidore, *Sententiae*; J. Elfassi, "Isidorus Hispalensis ep., 3. Sententiae," in Chiesa and Castaldi, *La trasmissione dei testi*, 1:209–18; Martín, "Une nouvelle édition critique," 134–45. The text of the fourth book can be found in *PL* 83, 1153–200: see J. Keskiaho, "Pseudo-Isidorus Hispalensis: *Sententiarum liber quartus* (CPPMA 1080). Some Notes on a 12th–13th Century Florilegy," *Revue Bénédictine* 120 (2010), 100–28.

117 Isidore, *De ortu et obitu patrum*; M.A. Andrés, "Isidorus Hispalensis ep., 7. De ortu et obitu patrum," in Chiesa and Castaldi, *La trasmissione dei testi*, 2:345–52; C. Chaparro Gómez, "El *De ortu et obitu patrum* de Isidoro de Sevilla. El problema de su composición y de su transmisión," in Andrés et al., *L'édition critique*, 49–62.

118 Isidore, *Prooemia*; M.A. Andrés, "Isidorus Hispalensis ep., 6. In libros Veteris et Novi Testamenti prooemia," in Chiesa and Castaldi, *La trasmissione dei testi*, 2:338–45; M.A. Andrés, "Las recensiones de los *In libros Veteris et Novi Testamenti proemia*," in Andrés et al., *L'édition critique*, 63–87; cf. Isidore, *De ortu et obitu patrum*, 53–96.

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In life and death the writings of Isidore were mutable, subject to reconciliation with each other or the latest progressive thinking. The final work securely ascribable to him, his *Rule for Monks*, confirms this picture. The text still has no critical edition in the generally accepted sense of the term, and the manuscripts have yet to be catalogued, let alone collated, but it appears to survive in two recensions. The first reflects the monastic observance which Isidore had laid down by 620 or so, while in the second a series of chapters have been altered to prescribe greater disciplinary rigour; dateable to the mid-7th century, this later version reflects the undeniably more severe monasticism favoured by Fructuosus of Braga and his circle—the original, in other words, has been brought into line with changing fashions.[119] Such transformative transmission, recalling the successive, evolving editions of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, may also elucidate how we should handle a remark made by Braulio at the close of his Isidorian inventory: "there are many other minor works too by this man, and in the Church of God instruments with much elaboration."[120] The second half conjures the compilation of conciliar acts known as the *Hispana*, more or less now agreed in its earliest form to be Isidore's creation, illustrated with canonical tables of reference; the afterlife of this collection proved long and changing.[121] As to the first half, at least forty texts have been ascribed over the years to "this man" only to be reckoned dubious or spurious, including on the grounds that they are mere sets of extracts from his genuine writings.[122] One wonders whether some of them may turn out, when reread with greater

119 Isidore, *Regula monachorum*; J.C. Martín, "Isidorus Hispalensis ep., 11. Regula monachorum," in Chiesa and Castaldi, *La trasmissione dei testi*, 2:379–86; Martín, "Réflexions," 227–44; P. Barata Dias, "L'idéal monastique, les moines et les monastères du monde wisigothique," *Antiquité Tardive* 23 (2015), 143–54; with M.C. Díaz y Díaz, "Aspectos de la tradición de la *Regula Isidori*," *Studia Monastica* 5 (1963), 25–57; M.C. Díaz y Díaz, "The Lérins Manuscript of the Isidorian Rule: An Addition and a Partial Retraction," reprinted in *Vie chrétienne et culture dans l'Espagne du VIIe au Xe siècles* (Aldershot: 1992), 143–57; M.C. Díaz y Díaz, "Fructuosiana," in Holtz et al., *De Tertullien*, 2:31–40.

120 Braulio of Zaragoza, *Renotatio*, 204 (C.W. Barlow, trans., *Iberian Fathers*, vol. 2: *Braulio of Saragossa, Fructuosus of Braga* (Washington, DC: 1969), 142, is misleading); W.E. Preece, "The Organization of Knowledge and the Planning of Encyclopaedias: the Case of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*," *Cahiers d'Histoire Mondiale* 9 (1965), 798–818.

121 *CCH* 1, 257–325, 327–81, respectively; L. Kéry, *Canonical Collections of the Early Middle Ages (ca. 400–1140): A Bibliographical Guide to the Manuscripts and Literature* (Washington, DC: 1999), 57–72.

122 See E. Dekkers and A. Gaar, *Clavis Patrum Latinorum*, 3rd ed. (Turnhout: 1995), esp. 84^0^, 557, 1165, 1200, 1200a, 1363a, 1660; but also 385, 635a, 636, 910, 1144, 1189, 1194, 1196–7, 1208, 1216–7, 1217a-c, 1218–22, 1225–7, 1227a, 1228–9, 1229a, 1269, 1270^0^, 1533, 1715, 2312, 2346a^0^–b^0^; with e.g. R.E. McNally, "Isidoriana," *Theological Studies* 20 (1959), 432–42; J.N. Hillgarth, "The Position of Isidorian Studies: A Critical Review of the Literature, 1936–1975,"

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sensitivity to persona and practice, to be authorial drafts or versions, prepared for other audiences and contexts, further signs of a writer ever in search of the fullest, most perfect expression of knowledge.

4. The Harmless Drudge

Where, then, did that perfection lie? One striking feature of his publications is that many open *in medias res*, with nary a word as to scope or objective.[123] The *Etymologies* has only this laconic note above the table of contents: "So that you may readily find what you are seeking after in this work, this page reveals to you, reader, what topics the author of this volume treats in its constituent books."[124] Absent from many of the manuscripts, clearly this was not written by Isidore himself, and in any case it describes the function of the table of contents rather than the purpose of the text. Of course, one may call a point of order that, since his *magnum opus* was unfinished at the time of his death, we should not expect a preface. Yet the same is true of the *Sentences*, theologically and philosophically the most influential of his output: no prolegomena at all, and indeed Braulio characterises it as a simple *florilegium* distilled from Gregory the Great's *Morals on Job*, as if it made no argument of its own, rather than being a fundamental exposition of *inter alia* the proper relationship between king and conventicle.[125] Further in this vein is *On Illustrious Men*, which launches without fanfare. It is possible to maintain that, because this work picks up from Jerome and Gennadius and was typically transmitted in direct continuation to them, a prologue would have been superfluous, already provided at the head of the former's catalogue. But only implicitly is orthodoxy established as its key concern, through the opening hatchet job on Osius of Cordoba.[126] Isidore's authorial persona called for deliberate concealment from the reader. The *Histories*, in seeming contrast, has a famously full foreword, "In Praise of Hispania,"

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reprinted in *Visigothic Spain, Byzantium, and the Irish* (London: 1985), 839–45; J.N. Hillgarth, "Isidorian Studies, 1976–1985," *Studi Medievali* 31 (1990), 938.

123 On the preface as a genre, see J. Lake, ed., *Prologues to Ancient and Medieval History: A Reader* (Toronto: 2013), xi-xviii; J. Marincola, *On Writing History from Herodotus to Herodian* (London: 2017), xxix-lxxi.

124 Isidore, *Etymologiae*, index librorum.

125 Braulio of Zaragoza, *Renotatio*, 202; cf. L. Robles Carcedo, "Isidoro de Sevilla y la cultura eclesiástica de la España visigótica. Notas para un estudio del libro de las 'Sentencias,'" *Archivos Leoneses* 47–48 (1970), 13–185; P. Cazier, *Isidore de Séville et la naissance de l'Espagne catholique* (Paris: 1994), esp. 199–272.

126 Isidore, *De viris illustribus* 1.

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detaching the land from its Roman history in order to create a space for the Visigoths as the legitimate new rulers of the Peninsula. Amidst the ripe paeans to its *riqueza*, however, "in which the glorious fecundity of the Getic people rejoices so and flourishes abundantly," one realises that all speech is in the second and third person, and Isidore is nowhere to be found, screened by this curiously sexualised passing of an age: "at long last the most thriving nation of the Goths, after many victories in the world, eagerly seized and loved you, and enjoys you up to the present, amidst royal insignia and lavish wealth, secure in the fortune of empire."[127]

Where there is first-person introduction, it tends to the familiar reticence, but Isidore does nonetheless let slip some hints of his priorities. The *Greater Chronicle*, unlike *On Illustrious Men*, begins by explicitly name-checking predecessors: Julius Africanus, "the first of us to produce a summary of the times according to generations and reigns, in the simple style of history," Eusebius, Jerome, "some guys," and Victor of Tunnuna. Isidore then states flatly, phrased slightly differently in his two versions of the text, "We have recorded, with as much brevity as possible, the sum of the ages from the Creation of the world to the rule [or eras] of Heraclius Augustus and Sisebut [or Suinthila] the king."[128] Three compositional principles emerge fleetingly: simplicity and economy of expression and completeness of coverage. Elsewhere even this limited steer is lacking. The prologue of sorts to the *Prefaces* really just enumerates "the fullness of the New and Old Testament which the Catholic Church has received in the canon according to the ancient tradition of our forefathers," and modestly concludes, "having set out the order and number of books of the Old and New Testaments, let us now swiftly and briefly prefix short narrative preambles to them."[129] Be comprehensive, be succinct; now get down to business. This *modus operandi* still more blatantly characterises the two major works of contested attribution to Isidore's stylus. The treatise *On Numbers* opens abruptly with a definition of terms, pausing only to note that "it has pleased me, as you requested, to convey concisely the rules of some numbers."[130] In like fashion, *On Heresies* starts by distinguishing amongst the orthodox, the heretic, and the schismatic, before undertaking to "note down as summarily as we can the blasphemies of their errors one by one, in order that the precaution of the faithful

127 Isidore, *Historiae*, de laude Spaniae; Fontaine, *Isidore de Séville. Genèse*, 361–400.
128 Isidore, *Chronica* 1–2, 1.1, 2.
129 Isidore, *Prooemia*, prologus, 1, 17.
130 Isidore, *Liber numerorum* 1.1.

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may be the readier when the secret ways of the impious—dark and rough—are exposed."[131] Brief, but complete; nothing more.

The four works with epistolary prefaces fortunately crack open the door a bit wider. In the *Allegories*, asking "Orosius" to improve on his writing, Isidore explains that, "briefly excerpted, I have hastily gathered some of the most noteworthy names from the Law and the Gospels which are figuratively concealed by allegory and want some interpretation, in order to render them plain and clear to readers," touching on two themes already encountered in his pithier introductions. Yet conciseness can compromise coverage, since it has "allowed me neither to produce enough for a booklet nor to explain thoroughly the mysteries of the figures," requiring fancy presentation: "my feeling was that they might be grasped from the citations which are situated both before and after them."[132] Isidore strikes a like note when dedicating *On the Catholic Faith* to Florentina, expressing hope that quoting "some few of the innumerable passages" from the Old Testament "may firm up the grace of faith and demonstrate the ignorance of the faithless Jews."[133] At the beginning of book two, on prophecy, he adds, "you will be able, from a few words, to ascertain how many words the voices of the Prophets have in rejection of the Jewish people and their ceremonies, and how many words they have thundered in praise of the people of the New Testament."[134] There is a pronounced sense of anxious synecdoche, the part for the whole: that Isidore was acutely aware of his limited compass when measured by the incomprehensible totality of Christian knowledge.

The most forthcoming prologue is the letter to Sisebut prefixed to *On the Nature of Things*: by royal invitation, "I have commented on all these matters in a short text, presenting them just as they were written about by the ancients, and especially in the literature of Catholic men," adding to the recurrent themes an appeal to past authority, pagan as well as orthodox. Isidore further promises to spell out "on certain contested points both their meanings and their words, so that the authority of those statements may inspire trust," downplaying his originality while signalling his essential role as interpreter for the reader through the juxtaposition of "meanings (*sensus*)" and "words (*verba*)."[135] Enclosing the treatise *On Ecclesiastical Offices* to his brother Fulgentius, he concedes that the work has been "annotated from the most ancient writings of authors, as space has allowed," before tacking on a similar rider that "I have put

131 Isidore, *De haeresibus* 7.
132 Isidore, *Allegoriae*, praefatio, 1.
133 Isidore, *De fide Catholica contra Iudaeos* 1, praefatio.
134 Isidore, *De fide Catholica contra Iudaeos* 2, proemium.
135 Isidore, *De natura rerum*, praefatio, 2, 3.

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much in it of my own composition, and I have included other material just as it was in the sources, so that one's reading of the individual entries might more easily gain the authority of faith." How are we to take this? Consider his concluding statement: "forgiveness will be the more forthcoming for my errors because what draws from the testimony of writers is not to be assigned to the category of my fault."[136] All errors that remain, in other words, are not my own; citing ancient authorities, Isidore disguises his own contribution. The few words which immediately precede the text of books one and two proper lack any reference to his own input, replaced by appeal to Scripture, the Apostles, custom, and common usage.[137] Yet something of himself is undeniable in the work: he later laments how amateur lectors resent "those of us" who draw attention to their incompetent pronunciation.[138] It is Isidore the author who retreats from our view. But why?

The stakes are defined in the preface to *On the Birth and Death of the Fathers*: the notion of essential knowledge, the basics of Christian history, alongside the necessarily concise form of its communication. In Isidore's words, "the birth and deeds of certain holy and most noble men, together with their genealogies, are introduced in this booklet, besides which their worth and death and burial are recorded in the brief space of a sentence." The brief space: "although these may be known to all who make it through the bulk of the Scriptures, they nevertheless return more readily to the memory if they are read briefly expressed."[139] Brevity reconciles the Isidorian principle of universal coverage with the capacity of the reader to remember, crucial, as we have seen, to his own understanding and working method. The same theme returns in the prologue (by far the longest) to his *Questions on the Old Testament*, in which Isidore proposes to elucidate the allegorical meanings prefiguring Christianity: "gathering the opinions of the churchmen of old, like flowers from sundry meadows, we have put selections to hand." At the same time, he has condensed, "for succinct statements in brief exposition do not engender disdain by their prolixity; indeed, wordy and recondite eloquence wearies one, whereas short and simple delights." Underscoring the point, he adds, "drawing out these figures of deeds from the mystical treasuries of the wise, as we said above, we have collected them into one form by the abridgement of brevity; here the

136 Isidore, *De ecclesiasticis officiis*, epistula.

137 Isidore, *De ecclesiasticis officiis* 1, praefatio; 2, praefatio.

138 Isidore, *De ecclesiasticis officiis* 2.11.4; cf. M.C. Díaz y Díaz, "El latín de la Península Ibérica. Rasgos lingüísticos," in *Enciclopedia lingüística hispánica*, vol. 1: *Antecedentes. Onomástica*, eds. M. Alvar, A. Badía, R. de Balbín, and L.F. Lindley Cintra (Madrid: 1960), 196–97; Riché, *Education*, 302–03; Linehan, *History*, 47.

139 Isidore, *De ortu et obitu patrum*, praefatio.

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reader will not read our words, but re-read those of the ancients." Finally, he signs off with a roll call, of Origen, Victorinus, Ambrose, Jerome, Cassian, Augustine, Fulgentius, and above all Gregory the Great, his sources: "what I speak, they say, and my voice is their tongue."[140]

In his own eyes, Isidore was a simple transmitter, as an "author" actuated solely by a mission to make manageable, unobtrusively, that incomprehensible totality of Christian knowledge. How best to aid the reader in its digestion? Something of an answer is expressed in the preamble to his *Rule for Monks*, where Isidore observes, "there are a great many regulations or teachings of our ancestors to be found, enunciated here and there by the Holy Fathers; some of these have been handed down rather wordily or obscurely to posterity." From that unwieldy and inaccessible whole, "we have ventured to choose these few as examples for you, and to use rustic, common language for you to understand as easily as possible how to keep the vow of your profession." Selection and simplification: transmission, but a discreet originality of distillation and adaptation, for a new age: "he who has proven incapable of the challenging commands of the ancients should fix his step towards the discipline of this path, and be not disposed to turn away any longer."[141] The mission so stated, tension yet lingers between Isidore and his sources. Addressing the reader before book one of the *Differences*, he notes that "quite a few of the ancient authors have tried to distinguish differences in language, investigating something of the very subtle distinctions between some words and others," but alas, "owing to the needs of metre, pagan poets have confused the proper usage of language, and so from them the habit has derived of authors using a great many words indiscriminately." Critique of the classics? Acknowledging Cato (the Elder) as father of the genre, Isidore admits, "on his example I have, in part, put forth a very few distinctions of my own and, in part, produced them from books by other authors."[142] The sheer volume, the internal inconsistency, of what had to be distilled into memorable form made intervention unavoidable, but he remained uneasy—"a very few"—with shouldering that burden.

The *Synonyms* is unquestionably Isidore's most personal work, model for the "synonymous style" unfortunately adopted by some of his followers, and its oddly tripartite preface is relevant to this point. The first part, hyperbolic puff, is patently as above a later pious addition. In the second, Isidore himself says

140 Isidore, *Quaestiones in Vetus Testamentum*, *Genesis*, praefatio (cf. *Exodus*, praefatio); D.J. Uitvlugt, "The Sources of Isidore's Commentaries on the Pentateuch," *Revue Bénédictine* 112 (2002), 72–100.

141 Isidore, *Regula monachorum*, praefatio; N. Allies, "Re-Evaluating Monastic Rules: Style and Literary Purpose in the Rule of Isidore," *Downside Review* 128 (2010), 1–18.

142 Isidore, *Differentiae* 1, praefatio.

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to the reader with disarming humility, "recently there came into my hands a certain book called *Synonyms*, the structure of which made up my mind to assemble some lamentation for myself, or for the miserable; doubtless I have followed not the style of that work, but my own whim."[143] Familiar sentiment, taken to another level: his own original composition, yet all credit for its fashioning deflected onto a superior exemplar, which those afflicted by the adversities of the world should really consult. One last Isidorian prologue can serve to canonise this discomfort with creation. The *Hispana* is preceded by a lengthy anonymous introduction describing the four major councils (Nicaea, Constantinople, Ephesus, Chalcedon) and summarising the collection: the acts of the Greek and Latin councils and the decrees of the bishops of Rome, "gathered and arranged together by us from the discipline of the ecclesiastical order, that both the holy bishops may be instructed by paternal rules and the obedient ministers and people of the Church may be imbued with spiritual examples." These remarks end characteristically on a note of etymology:

> "canon" in Greek is called "rule" in Latin. It is called "rule" because it directs rightly, nor does it ever lead in the other direction; some say that it is called "rule" since it rules or because it reveals a norm of living rightly, or because it corrects what is distorted and evil.[144]

That act of compilation was perhaps the most important legacy of Isidore besides the *Etymologies*, selecting and transmitting such canons as would guide Church practice in the West for centuries, and he performed it from behind the screen of anonymity.

The work which went into such compilation is on full view in Isidore's *On Illustrious Men*, a guide to his reading in which he also offers the most sustained exposition of his views on composition. One distinguishing feature is his refusal to comment on texts which he has not read: he leaves a definite impression of learning in progress, in perfect alignment with his continual revising, an author acutely aware that he had not read everything, equally conscious of the imperative to do so.[145] And for practical ends; most of the surviving works cited here can be readily identified put to use in his other

143 Isidore, *Synonyma* 1.3.

144 *Hispana*, praefatio (ed. *CCH* 3, 43–46). For translation see R. Somerville and B.C. Brasington, trans., *Prefaces to Canon Law Books in Latin Christianity: Selected Translations, 500–1245* (New Haven: 1998), 55–57.

145 H. Koeppler, "*De viris illustribus* and Isidore of Seville," *Journal of Theological Studies* 37 (1936), 34; cf. A. Kaldellis, *A Cabinet of Byzantine Curiosities: Strange Tales and Surprising Facts from History's Most Orthodox Empire* (Oxford: 2017), xi.

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writings.[146] Isidore records in his notes on Martin of Braga, "I have indeed read one book of his on the distinctions of the four virtues," while he confesses in regard to Licinianus of Cartagena that "we have certainly read not a few of his letters … but the remaining yield of his industry and labour has totally failed to come to our notice."[147] Conscientious in bibliography, sensitive to the limits of his research: respecting a tract on virginity by Severus of Malaga, "frankly, we admit that we have learned of its title yet are ignorant of the contents," and he signs off his notices for both Apringius of Beja and John of Vallclara by recording that they too wrote sundry other works which have not come to his attention.[148] Partly it was a question of honesty. In profiling Justus of Urgell, he minutes, "his brothers Nebridius and Elpidius are reported to have written some works, but because we are unfamiliar with them we recognise that they must be left unspoken."[149] At the same time, it was also an aspect of Isidore's Sisyphean task, the quest for true, literal comprehension: on Maximus of Zaragoza, he concludes that "he is also said to have written many other works—I have not read these yet."[150]

The goal of reading everything was a source of palpable anxiety. One could take as commonplace Isidore's remarks on John Chrysostom: "he composed many and varied tractates, quite excessively long to enumerate, and indeed, although not the full measure of his zeal, nevertheless as many effusions of his eloquence as possible have been translated from Greek into Latin."[151] There is a real (and relatable) note of despair, however, in his reaction to Possidonius and the bibliography of Augustine, "cataloguing how many works the same most blessed doctor has written, totalling volumes of over 400 books, but an infinite series of homilies, letters, and enquiries as well, such that nigh scarcely can anyone write by hand as many more works as he composed by his own effort."[152] An opportunity was the most one could ask: Isidore concedes with regard to Fulgentius of Ruspe, "we have only plucked these from the precious flowers of his teaching; his is a better lot to whom the Lord has lent the delights of all his books."[153] And how much truer of Gregory the Great: in the 35 volumes of his *Morals on Job*, "so many mysteries of the sacraments are revealed, so many

146 J.C. Martín, "El Catálogo de los varones ilustres de Isidoro de Sevilla (*CPL* 1206): contenidos y datación," *Studia Historica. Historia Antigua* 31 (2013), 129–51.
147 Isidore, *De viris illustribus*, 22, 29.
148 Isidore, *De viris illustribus*, 30, 17, 31.
149 Isidore, *De viris illustribus*, 21.
150 Isidore, *De viris illustribus*, 33.
151 Isidore, *De viris illustribus*, 6.
152 Isidore, *De viris illustribus*, 8.
153 Isidore, *De viris illustribus*, 14.

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teachings of morals are commanded unto love of the eternal life, and so many ornaments of words shine brightly, that no wise man will be able to explain, even if all his limbs should be turned into a tongue." Reviewing all the works of the *servus servorum Dei*, Isidore reaches the *Homilies on the Gospels*, "unknown to us; but happy, nay all too happy, he who has been able to know all the statements of his efforts."[154] So saying, he moves to his next subject.

In the face of so much still to read, Isidore prioritised *brevitas* in his own style, to the enduring frustration of all those who have looked for answers in his *Histories* ("unworthy of the famous savant who wrote it. He could hardly have told us less, except by not writing at all").[155] He also promoted it in the work of others. Paulinus of Nola is commended for a short book on the blessings of the patriarchs, "composed with succinct enough brevity," while Eugippius merits approval for the *Life of Severinus*, "communicated in a brief style."[156] But Isidore's attitude is more complex than a simple preference for telegraphic prose. He writes in praise of John the Cappadocian: "this man published in Greek a rescript on the sacrament of baptism to Bishop Leander, my lord of blessed memory and my predecessor, in which he puts nothing of his own, but only replicates the views of the Fathers of old on triple immersion."[157] Transmission trumps innovation, yet with Apringius of Beja he allows that his interpretation of the Apocalypse is "nearly better than the ancient churchmen seem to have expounded."[158] Nearly—and actually so in the person of Gregory the Great alone, "through the grace of the Holy Spirit gifted with such a light of knowledge that no learned man not only of present times, but also even in past times, was ever equal to him."[159] Through a miraculous wisdom one might match or even surpass those who had gone before; on the whole, though, it would be better to err on the side of caution, repeating or at most rewording.

Originality nonetheless had a certain role to play. Writing of Proba, authoress of a *cento* on the life of Christ composed in Virgilian metre, Isidore says, "we do not admire her effort, but we do praise her cleverness," fidelity to a sound model combined with rather more suitable subject matter.[160] Note that the

154 Isidore, *De viris illustribus*, 27.

155 E.A. Thompson, *The Goths in Spain* (Oxford: 1969), 7; J. Wood, "*Brevitas* in the Writings of Isidore of Seville," in *Early Medieval Spain*, eds. Deyermond and Ryan, 37–53; C. Codoñer, "La lengua de Isidoro," *Antiquité Tardive* 23 (2015), 47–57.

156 Isidore, *De viris illustribus*, 4, 13.

157 Isidore, *De viris illustribus*, 26.

158 Isidore, *De viris illustribus*, 17.

159 Isidore, *De viris illustribus*, 27.

160 Isidore, *De viris illustribus*, 5.

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exemplar for her "almost diabolical ingenuity," however, was a pagan poet.[161] Surprised? Many have remarked on the warmth of Isidore towards his brother Leander, profiled amongst these other celebrated men. Characteristically it is only here, by proxy, that he reveals the family history of flight from "Byzantine" Spain. Yet lukewarm would be more accurate: "for the rest of his fellow bishops he likewise issued a great many familiar letters, if not in overly beautiful words, at least acute in their opinions."[162] What style guide, then, was he following? Isidore articulates his sensibility in a paragraph on Eucherius, author of a minor work in celebration of the desert, "dictated most brilliantly and in sweet speech; we praise the doctor for this work, even though he nevertheless utters few beautiful words in it." Following the lead of Jerome before him, he consults Cicero (anonymously) to clarify: "for brevity, as the man says, is at times praiseworthy in one or another aspect of speaking, but it does not garner praise in all eloquence."[163] The beautiful before the brief, disciplined as by Proba, given freer rein than by Fulgentius or Eucherius. Isidore applied these criteria in his own practice, and Braulio tells us as much, for in counting his subject's 17 works, he departs from standard verbs of writing on three occasions: the *Greater Chronicle*, which he "collected (*collectum*)"; the *Rule for Monks*, which he "tempered (*temperauit*)"; and the *Sentences*, which he "embellished with choice selections (*floribus … decorauit*)" from the *Morals on Job*.[164] The work of a shaping hand—but how and with what purpose did Isidore decide amongst all the sources for potential transmission?

5. The Stacks of Heaven

"In him," Braulio meditated on his master and mentor, "Antiquity regained a certain something for itself—or rather, our day and age pictured the knowledge of Antiquity in him." Like a mirror; perhaps more like reinforced foundations, for "God raised him in this latter-day era after so many failures in Hispania, I believe, to restore the monuments of the ancients, lest we grow old in every conceivable kind of rusticity—as if to lend us a certain support."[165] To

161 E.K. Rand, *Founders of the Middle Ages* (Cambridge, Mass.: 1928), 200, complete with "a mock-Miltonian rendering" at 199–200.

162 Isidore, *De viris illustribus*, 28.

163 Isidore, *De viris illustribus*, 15; Cicero, *Brutus*, 13.50; Fontaine, *Isidore de Séville et la culture classique*, 1:321–37; cf. Jerome, *De viris illustribus*, praefatio, 4.

164 Braulio of Zaragoza, *Renotatio librorum domini Isidori*, 202, 203.

165 Braulio of Zaragoza, *Renotatio librorum domini Isidori*, 199, 205.

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his contemporaries, Isidore had polished, or at least propped back up, the icon of the ancient world, and its civilisation. But was the newly visible image what the old one had been? Did he restore or reimagine it? Many of Isidore's works can be comfortably situated in established Christian genres: the *Allegories*, *Prefaces*, *Questions on the Old Testament*, and *On the Birth and Death of the Fathers* are all, as we have seen, standard exercises in modes of biblical exegesis, just as *On the Catholic Faith* draws from a long tradition of anti-Jewish polemic. *On Illustrious Men* picks up the baton from Jerome and Gennadius (and pagans prior to them), while the *Rule for Monks* bills itself explicitly as a distillation of its forerunners. *On Ecclesiastical Offices* is a manual in the line of Ambrose, whereas the *Greater Chronicle* and *Histories* look to Eusebius and Cassiodorus, and the *Sentences* reflects on Gregory the Great's thought. *On Numbers* and *On Heresies*, if authentically Isidorian, operate too within the familiar parameters of numerology and categorisation of doctrinal error. This is not to say that there is no innovation here: to take one example, it has often been remarked that Isidore narrows the former universalism of *On Illustrious Men* to a distinctly North African and Iberian focus in his installment.[166] But such is hardly wholesale reinvention of the genre.

The transformative author hymned by Braulio begins to emerge in the lexicographical and encyclopaedic writings, where Isidore deliberately adopted hitherto pagan literary models in order to subordinate language and learning to a Christian epistemological framework.[167] The method behind the *Differences* would have been recognisable to Varro and Verrius Flaccus, founders of Latin lexicography; the novelty lies in the subject matter, or rather the adjoining of traditional linguistic enquiry to specifically Christian spiritual concerns.[168] The *Synonyms* pursues these concerns a step farther, yet still casts them in the archetypical mode of classical philosophy: a dialogue, between Man and

166 J. Wood, "Playing the Fame Game: Bibliography, Celebrity, and Primacy in Late Antique Spain," *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 20 (2012), 613–14; cf. C. Codoñer, "Los *De viris illustribus* de la Hispania visigótica. Entre la biografía y la hagiografía," in *Las biografías griega y latina como género literario. De la Antigüedad al Renacimiento. Algunas calas*, ed. V. Valcárcel Martínez (Vitoria: 2009), 239–55.

167 See above all Fontaine, *Isidore de Séville et la culture classique*, 1:27–337.

168 C. Codoñer, "Les plus anciennes compilations de *Differentiae*: formation et évolution d'un genre littéraire grammaticale," *Revue de Philologie* 59 (1985), 201–19; C. Codoñer, "La conception de la *Differentia* dans le receuil *Inter aptum* d'Isidore de Séville," *Revue de Philologie* 60 (1986), 187–96; Velázquez Soriano, *Latine dicitur*, 61–125; T. Denecker, *Ideas on Language in Early Latin Christianity: From Tertullian to Isidore of Seville* (Leiden: 2017), 287–339; J.E.G. Zetzel, *Critics, Compilers, and Commentators: An Introduction to Roman Philology, 200 BCE-800 CE* (Oxford: 2018), 232–33.

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Reason, about *askesis* and the fate of the sinful soul.[169] In both cases, Isidore was consciously redirecting an ancient genre to a new Christian purpose: not simply a silent compiler and condenser, he was a discreet and discriminating bridge-builder between the two traditions. Where this project assumes universal dimensions is in his *On the Nature of Things*, drawing inspiration from Pliny the Elder, and above all in his *Etymologies*. The North African connexion again: the closest model for the latter is the 5th-century encyclopaedia by the pagan Martianus Capella, *On the Marriage of Philology and Mercury*, a summary of the "seven disciplines" or liberal arts, the same taxonomy with which Isidore commenced his endeavour.[170] In a sense, all his other writings can be understood as preparatory studies to this vast compilation, which in merging pagan source material with a Christian cosmology effectively re-homed the one in the other.[171] Isidore was reframing knowledge itself: insofar as all knowledge was now to be found inside the covers of his great book, it was all Christianised knowledge; the seeming anachronism is not an anomaly but organic to his purpose, to reach back into antiquity and bring it forward from the pagan past into the Christian present, to create a poetics of Christianised antiquity, to preserve the synthesis for the memory of the future.[172] The first distinctively Christian etymological encyclopaedia, all the fragments of remembered reading laid out within it formed a card catalogue for the library of God.

One of the enduring interests of Isidorian research has been his own library at Seville. If we could only get hold of a reader's pass and rootle amongst its well-stocked shelves, surely then we would know him.[173] What we do have is 27 poems in elegiac distichs, preserved under his name and offering a guide to those holdings. They have seldom been tapped in this or any regard: perhaps

169 J. Fontaine, "Isidore de Séville, auteur 'ascétique': les énigmes des *Synonyma*," *Studi Medievali* 6 (1965), 163–95.

170 W.H. Stahl, R. Johnson, and E.L. Burge, *Martianus Capella and the Seven Liberal Arts*, 2 vols (New York: 1971–77), vol. 1, esp. 55–71.

171 M. Amsler, *Etymology and Grammatical Discourse in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages* (Amsterdam: 1989), 133–72; A.-I. Magallón, *La tradición gramatical de* differentia *y* etymologia *hasta Isidoro de Sevilla* (Zaragoza: 1996); Codoñer, *Introducción*, 47–73; B. Ribémont, *Les origines des encyclopédies médiévales. D'Isidore de Séville aux Carolingiens* (Paris: 2001).

172 E.R. Curtius, *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages*, trans. W.R. Trask (Princeton: 1953), 450–57; Fontaine, *Isidore de Séville et la culture classique*, 2:785–830.

173 See Fontaine, *Isidore de Séville et la culture classique*, 2:735–62; J.C. Martín-Iglesias, "La biblioteca cristiana de los padres hispanovisigodos (siglos VI–VII)," *Veleia* 30 (2013), 259–88; J. Elfassi, "Connaître la bibliothèque pour connaître les sources," *Antiquité Tardive* 23 (2015), 59–66; J. Elfassi, "Nuevas fuentes en la biblioteca de Isidoro de Sevilla," in *Latinidad medieval hispánica*, ed. J.F. Mesa Sanz (Florence: 2017), 107–16.

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because of lingering doubts about their authorship—queried authenticity is as close as academia has to a "no entry" sign.[174] Now that the question seems all but settled, what are they, and what can they teach us?[175] The first poem is entitled "legend (*titulus*) of the library (*bibliothecae*)": traditionally it and the 14 which follow have been read as inscriptions on the bookcases or boxes where the codices of the episcopal library were held. Based on their respective headings, the next three poems are in like manner thought to have decorated the infirmary, the half-dozen thereafter the pharmacy, and the last three the all-important scriptorium. The poems on Gregory the Great and Leander seem to treat them as deceased; if recently so, composition would date to the first decade of the 7th century. But that is guesswork. The run of verses, as will probably not stun you, survives in two recensions: a shorter, of 15, and a longer, of 24, transmitted at times with the *Questions on the Old Testament*, though in truth selection and ordering vary greatly amongst the manuscripts.[176] According to their most recent editor, Isidore himself picked the poems in the shorter recension and posted them to a Galician monastery, where they became associated with works by Martin of Braga, a hallmark of the transmission history. Back in Seville, a disciple of the *maestro* later copied 24 of the poems off the walls, missing out what are now the last three, and thereby created the longer recension. The latter, however, is not only the more complete, but also the more metrically correct. The simplest reconstruction of the manuscript evidence is that Isidore wrote 27 poems as a set, which he then joined to his *Questions on the Old Testament*, and a mutilated copy of this is the ancestor of the longer recension: he is rather more likely to have packaged his verses together with his own work, and this is the version subsequently known by Visigothic and Mozarabic authors, hence probably the closer to the archetype (if there was just one). The shorter recension, on the other hand, descends via corrupt transcription from the work of a 7th-century Galician monk, who made his

174 A. Ortega, "Los 'Versus Isidori,'" *Helmantica* 12 (1961), 261–69; M.C. Díaz y Díaz, "La transmisión de los textos antiguos en la Península Ibérica en los siglos VII–XI," *Settimane di Studio* 22, 2 vols (Spoleto: 1975), 1:136–42.

175 Isidore, *Versus*, 22–27; J.C. Martín, "Nouvelles réflexions sur la tradition manuscrite des *Versus Isidori* (CPL 1212)," in *Poesía latina medieval* (*siglos V–XV*). *Actas del IV Congreso del "Internationales Mittellateinerkomitee,"* eds. M.C. Díaz y Díaz and J.M. Díaz de Bustamante (Florence: 2005), 123–36; cf. P. Hamblenne, "Les *Tituli bibliothecae* sont-ils d'Isidore?," *Revue Belge de Philologie et d'Histoire* 80 (2002), 239–56; J. Gil, "Marcial en España," *Humanitas* 56 (2004), 228–29.

176 Short version: 1–2, 7–8, 5–6, 10, 9, 13–4, 4, 19, 25–7; long version: 2–15, 1, 16–24; see J.C. Martín, "Isidorus Hispalensis ep., 13. Versus sancti Isidori," in Chiesa and Castaldi, *La trasmissione dei testi*, 2:396–97.

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own selection, rearranging and repackaging the poems according to his interests, in the long Isidorian tradition of dynamic transmission.

The reader is invited to peruse the library and learn. Imagining a brother who says smugly, "there is nothing left for me to study" after the Histories and the Law, Isidore replies, "if you say so now, then you really understand nothing."[177] But hold a moment: is this *bibliotheca* simply a library in Seville, or is it actually the Library—the Bible itself? The term was ambiguous in late antiquity and the early Middle Ages; binding these poems together with the exegetical *Questions* starts to make sense if we take them to be arguing for a programme of reading in which Scripture has absolute precedence. In the next generation, Eugenius (11) of Toledo certainly thought so: writing his own *bibliotheca* verses, he drew directly on Isidore's language to describe the books of the Bible, a prestige copy of which his small success once adorned.[178] Perhaps we need to accept a deliberate slippage of meaning, collapsing the distinction between library and Library. The second poem, after all, adds a further note of caution, contrasting the mundane with the sacred: there are "meadows full of thorns but abundant in flowers," such that "if you do not wish to grasp thorns, pick the roses."[179] This is not immediately explained, leaving the reader primed with anticipation. The poet then moves to "the venerable volumes of the twin Law," here unambiguously the Bible ("the New with the Old"), before turning back to Origen and the looming danger: sapient, prolific, "I was ruined by a guilty tongue … my *On Principles* alone led to my fall."[180] Be careful. Alternating opposites, we regain the light with Hilary of Poitiers, "thundering of voice," and Ambrose of Milan, "distinguished in signs and hymns."[181] Gradually the message resolves itself: in reading lies potential salvation as well as damnation.

Isidore picks up a familiar theme when he reaches Augustine: "he who confesses to have read you lies," for in reality, "what reader can own all your works?" He of Hippo and his thousand volumes bear witness that, though wisdom may come from many, "if Augustine is to hand, he alone suffices for you."[182] In rapid hit parade, Jerome, "a most learned interpreter in various languages," John Chrysostom, "celebrated as doctor everywhere" for his books, and Cyprian of Carthage, "more illustrious in eloquence than all," whizz by before at last we reach the heart of the matter.[183] Virgil, Horace, Ovid, and Persius are dreadful,

177 Isidore, *Versus*, 1, ll. 6, 8.
178 Eugenius of Toledo, *Carmina*, 8, esp. ll. 3, 26.
179 Isidore, *Versus*, 2, ll. 3–4.
180 Isidore, *Versus*, 3, ll. 1, 2; 4, ll. 4, 9.
181 Isidore, *Versus*, 5, l. 1; 6, l. 1.
182 Isidore, *Versus*, 7, ll. 1, 2, 6.
183 Isidore, *Versus*, 8, l. 1; 9, l. 4; 10, l. 1.

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begins one of the two longest poems; indeed, Lucan and Statius are objectionable. "Let sweet Prudentius appear with his exceptional voice," therefore, or "read through the studious poem of fluent Avitus," or even have a go at Juvencus and Sedulius, "both flowering with verses."[184] The argument concerns individual poets less than the offensiveness of all classical verse in comparison with the sweetness of any Christian poetry. Lest he be misread, Isidore emphasises that the last pair, composers of biblical epics, "take long draughts from the Gospel font," before looking the reader directly in the eye: "thus, desist from deferring to the pagan poets; when you drink such good things, what is Callirhoe to you?"[185] Frogmarching a naiad past, whose Greek name means "beautiful flow" (or "Lady Lovely Stream"), is typical etymological wordplay, but the moral of the story is now clear, a feeling shared by Christian intellectuals throughout late antiquity struggling with the need to make use of their classical inheritance: caution—danger ahead.[186]

Continuing our tour, Eusebius and Orosius share one (dull) bookcase, Gregory the Great shines forth as the patron of Rome like Augustine as the *magister* of Hippo, and Leander is "reckoned not wholly unequal to the ancient doctors."[187] We then switch gears to Theodosius, Paul, and Gaius, emblematic of the real value of Roman law, "which governs the Latin forum with truthful voice."[188] From his brother on they collectively personify Isidore's abiding ambivalence about emulation, innovation, and precedent. This gallery of authors gives way to Cosmas, Damian, Hippocrates, and Galen, "whom medicine celebrates throughout the world," neatly neutralising the medics of antiquity in balance with the twin brother physician-martyrs of early Christianity.[189] The first "medical poem" is usually taken as a section break, conducting us into the episcopal infirmary, but Hippocrates at least is also one authority whom Isidore name-checks in drawing up book four, "On Medicine," of his *Etymologies*, while Galen is cited explicitly (though indirectly, via Jerome) in book twenty.[190] The next playfully urges the medic to be responsive to the patient lest he run out of business, and the third counsels him to attend to both "the pauper and the powerful," profiting only from the latter—as if to ensure that medical practice

184 Isidore, *Versus*, 11, ll. 3, 5, 7.
185 Isidore, *Versus*, 11, ll. 8–10.
186 See G.P. Goold, ed., *Chariton. Callirhoe* (Cambridge, Mass.: 1995), 12.
187 Isidore, *Versus*, 14, l. 1.
188 Isidore, *Versus*, 15, l. 2; cf. F.J. Andrés Santos, "Derecho y jurisprudencia en las fuentes de Isidoro de Sevilla," *Antiquité Tardive* 23 (2015), 155–62.
189 Isidore, *Versus*, 16, l. 1.
190 Isidore, *Etymologiae*, 4.3-4, 20.2.37; M.V. Martino, "*De inventoribus Medicinae*. L'origine de la Médecine dans les *Etymologiae* d'Isidore de Séville," *Eruditio Antiqua* 10 (2018), 105–14.

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is justly animated by Christian charity.[191] The following poem, the nineteenth in the set, is equalled in length only by Isidore's takedown of classical poets: putatively a "legend for an unguent seller" stocking "balsam, frankincense, reed, and saffron of Corycium," it provides an excuse for him to show off his knowledge of exotica from Arabia, India, and elsewhere, which "gifts are useful for many cures."[192] The point of reference is again the *Etymologies*, books four and seventeen ("On Rustic Matters"), where those products are specifically enumerated in the larger context of scents and aromatic trees and plants.[193] Evidently Isidore warmed to the theme because this poem, normally counted the first of a series adorning the episcopal drug store, is succeeded by five more on perfumes from China and the Yemen, salves from Greece and Italy, and vessels holding pigments, the last also tallying with his noted interest in storage containers in book twenty ("On Provisions and Various Implements").[194] The subject of these verses is not, or not only, places and things but the text of the *Etymologies* itself—a virtual bookstore.[195] Isidore sets his material to metre, creating images of a library, an infirmary, and a pharmacy, a *bodega* of knowledge run on Christian principles.

The final three poems shift our focus back from sources and materials to books and their production in the scriptorium. The attitude is stern, inexorable; the tone martial. Hailing the reader "who knows how to vie by reed and pen with dead skin," Isidore beckons him in: "may he wage his wars here."[196] The struggle is ceaseless, and "the copyist who is wandering around at midday" is liable to be hung up and "beaten about the back with pairs of whips."[197] A mordant sense of humour? No—the final poem is fragmentary, but the first three incomplete lines are concerned with the scribe who makes repeated mistakes when he ought to do better. Audience, be silent, for "the scribe does not suffer anyone to speak in his presence"; ultimately running out of patience, Isidore snaps, "here is not where you should carry on chattering. Get lost."[198] In the world constructed by these 27 poems, learning and literature are infinite but are clearly sorted into the beneficial and the harmful: steer a

191 Isidore, *Versus*, 18, l. 1.
192 Isidore, *Versus*, 19, titulus, ll. 4, 10.
193 Isidore, *Etymologiae*, 4.12, 17.7–9.
194 Isidore, *Etymologiae*, 20.9.
195 See S. de Brestian, "Material Culture in the *Etymologies* of Isidore of Seville," *Journal of Late Antiquity* 11 (2018), 216–31.
196 Isidore, *Versus*, 25, ll. 1, 2.
197 Isidore, *Versus*, 26, ll. 1, 2.
198 Isidore, *Versus*, 27, ll. 5–6.

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safe course, or suffer a deadly fall. Isidore himself cautions in his *Rule*, "let the monk beware of reading books by pagans or heretics, for it is better to be unaware of their pernicious teaching than to fall into some snare of error through experience."[199] Forewarned and forearmed, however, we can admit some good even in that heathen past. The same author takes quiet pride in his work, fashioning the knowledge both sacred and mundane which he marshals in his *Etymologies* into programmatic verses on medicine and *orientalia*. Perhaps in this spirit book four was the first to be written? Above all, knowledge is a serious business, labour with no more end than the works of Augustine. What, then, was the goal of the quest? Writing his poem on poetry itself, Isidore defines the task before him: to subordinate the pagan to the Christian, to realise the Augustinian impulse to harness antiquity and ride it out of Egypt to the Promised Land.[200]

6. Antiquity Reshelved

The middle of the 9th century saw a fight break out between Albarus of Cordoba, polemicist at large, and Bodo-Eleazar, a Christian convert to Judaism from Francia. Academic name-calling was the trigger, and Albarus did not take kindly to being labelled "a compiler (*conpilator*)," a mere transmitter of ideas and arguments.[201] Shaken, he never fully recovered from the blow, but how would Isidore, one of his heroes ("doctor of Hispania" to the Mozarabs), have reacted?[202] Centuries later, when Dante ascended into Paradise, he beheld "the glowing breath of Isidore flaming out," keeping celestial company with Boethius, Bede, and Richard of Saint-Victor: compilers all, yet who each created something new through compiling.[203] Isidore wrote his last words in 636, and strictly speaking did not join the "sacred corporation" of Church Doctors until 1722; what did he leave behind?[204] On one level, a language Christianised, as a

199 Isidore, *Regula monachorum*, 8.

200 See Augustine, *De doctrina Christiana*, 2.40-42; with E. dell'Elicine, "Agustín, Isidoro y el arte gramatical," in *Estudios de Derecho y Teología en la Edad Media*, ed. A. Morin (Buenos Aires: 2012), 62–84.

201 Albarus of Cordoba, *Epistulae*, 19; F. Riess, "From Aachen to al-Andalus: the Journey of Deacon Bodo (823–76)," *Early Medieval Europe* 13 (2005), 140–50; cf. Fontaine, *Isidore de Séville. Genèse*, 329–44.

202 Elipandus of Toledo, *Epistulae*, 6.7.

203 Dante, *Paradiso*, 10, ll. 130–31.

204 Curtius, *European Literature*, 260.

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generation after him Ildefonsus of Toledo took the "synonymous style" to its extreme in exhaustive, exhausting praise of the Virgin Mary (though Erasmus, for one, was not a fan of "authors like Isidore … at so many removes from *copia* that they are unable to express their thoughts in good Latin even once").[205] More to the point, a specifically Christian lexicography, a concern for correct and precise Christian expression, which may make the Carolingian experiment, properly, nothing more than an aspect of Isidorian reception history. But the weight of the *Etymologies*, their scale and their scope, encourages thinking of his legacy to us as a Christian encyclopaedia, when it should really be Christian encyclopaedism. In his historical writing Isidore set the Visigoths in the context of universal history, and in this overarching project he set Christian knowledge in the context of universal learning and language. Both were statements of belonging.

Look ahead, to the world after the Islamic conquest of Iberia in 711. The *Collected Anecdotes*, an Arabic compilation of the 11th century (maybe), describes Seville as the great city of the Peninsula, the seat of the Romans; when the Visigothic kings relocated the capital to Toledo, all the Roman aristocracy, clergy, and leading laymen remained behind.[206] What can this be but a memory of Isidore, his see—his library—the anchor of classical civilisation? New Latin chronicles too picked up where he had left off in his *Histories*, but with more than mere continuance, a hold still firm on that great binding chain: when the Mozarabic chronicler of 754 cried out in lament for his ruined Hispania, he despaired that anyone could express the loss, even "if all his limbs were to be turned into a tongue," echoing the words used by Isidore for his anxious inability to attain the insight of Gregory the Great and his *Morals on Job*.[207] The project, the struggle and the dream, an end to anxiety: the classical in service of the Christian, the farthest reaches of learning brought home and into order, catalogued and shelved in the mansions of God's library, awaiting consultation by the interested reader.

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205 Erasmus, *De copia*, dedicatory letter, 285; see also *De copia*, 399.

206 *Akhbār majmū'a*, 13, 54.

207 *Chronicle of 754*, 55; cf. Isidore, *De viris illustribus*, 27.

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CHAPTER 4

Leander of Seville and His Influence on Isidore of Seville

Purificación Ubric Rabaneda

1 Introduction

Leander (d. 600/601), the eldest brother of Isidore, is one of the keys to understanding the historical, ideological, and cultural background from which his younger sibling emerged.[1] Leander, Isidore's predecessor as bishop of Seville, was one of the most influential political and religious characters of his time and played a pivotal role in the conversion of the Visigoths to Catholicism. Leander, an intellectual figure of some standing himself, looked carefully after the upbringing of Isidore and seems to have ensured that he received a high-quality intellectual, spiritual, and pastoral education. It would be fair to say that Leander prepared the path for Isidore to become one of the most influential figures of the early Middle Ages.

In spite of his great significance, the personality, role, works, and thought of Leander have not received as much scholarly attention as they might deserve.[2] Leander's achievements have often been downplayed in scholarly and popular accounts of the period, especially in comparison to those of Isidore. Another

1 I wish to acknowledge the Plan Propio de Investigación of the University of Granada and the Project HAR2016-75145-P for funding my research.

2 For an overview of Leander, in several languages, see Ursicino Domínguez del Val, *Leandro de Sevilla* (Madrid: 1981) (with details on his life, works and thought, and sources on the Arianism controversy in Spanish Latin literature); María Adelaida Andrés Sanz, "Leandro de Sevilla," in *La Hispania visigótica y mozárabe. Dos épocas en su literatura*, ed. Carmen Codoñer (Salamanca: 2010), 63–8, Domingo Ramos-Lissón, "S. Leandro de Sevilla," in *Patrología* (Navarra: 2009), 453–55; Jesús Niño Sánchez-Guisande, "Leandro de Sevilla," *Compostellanum* 45 (2000), 63–79; José Madoz, "San Leandro de Sevilla," *Estudios Eclesiásticos* 56 (1981), 415–53; Luis A. García Moreno, *Prosopografía del reino visigodo de Toledo* (Salamanca: 1974), 91–3; John R.C. Martyn, *Saint Leander, Archbishop of Seville: A book on the teaching of nuns and a homily in praise of the Church* (New York: 2009); Alberto Ferreiro, "Leander of Seville," *Brepols International Encyclopaedia for the Middle Ages On-Line* (2005); Leandro Navarra, *Leandro di Siviglia. Profilo storico-letterario* (Rome: 1987); Valentina Lunardini, "Leandro di Siviglia," in *Enciclopedia Gregoriana*, eds. Giuseppe Cremascoli and Antonella Degl'Innocenti (Florence: 2008), 201; Franz Görres, "Leander Bischof of Sevilla und Metropolit der Kirchenprovinz Bätica," *Zeitschrift für wissenschaftliche Theologie* 29 (1886), 36–50.

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tendency is to introduce a highly optimistic, even euphoric, tone into depictions of Leander's achievements, especially regarding his role in the events that ended in the Visigoths' conversion from Arianism to the Nicene Creed in 589. Other scholars have been excessively cautious in their interpretations of Leander's involvement in these events.[3] The following pages situate Leander in his historical context and introduce his works, with the intention of facilitating understanding of his position in the political, religious, and cultural world of the later 6th century and hence of establishing the extent of his influence on Isidore.

The sources of information on Leander include: a short biographical sketch by Isidore in his *De viris illustribus*; a few lines by Leander himself addressed to his sister Florentina in *De institutione virginum et contemptu mundi*; and some brief references by Pope Gregory I, the chronicler John of Biclarum, and the historian Gregory of Tours. These references are scarce, at times contradictory, and difficult to interpret.[4] In addition, it is highly likely that the majority of Leander's own work has been lost.

2 The First Years of Leander

Leander was probably born sometime between 530 and 540 in the province of Carthaginiensis, perhaps in its capital, Cartagena (in the south-east of modern Spain). He was the eldest son of Severianus and of a woman of an unknown name, whom some scholars call "Turtur" due to Leander's reference (possibly metaphorical) in Leander's *On the training of nuns and the contempt of the world*.[5] Leander had, as far as we know, two brothers, Fulgentius and Isidore,

3 See Leandro Navarra, "Interventi di Leandro di Siviglia negli sviluppi storici e religiosi della Spagna visigotica: aspetti positivi e limiti," *Studi Storici Religiosi* 4 (1980), 123–34, 124, and Domínguez del Val, *Leandro de Sevilla*, 19.

4 Isidore, *De viris illustribus* 28 (Isidore also mentions his brother Leander in his *Chronica* 408, *Versus* 13, and *Epistola ad Claudium ducem* 12); Leander, *De institutione virginum* 31; Gregory the Great, *Epistola* 1.41 (April 591), 5.53 (July 595), 9.228 (July 599), and *Moralia*, praefatio; John of Biclarum, *Chronicon*, *s. a.* 579–90; Gregory of Tours, *Decem libri historiarum* 5.38, 6.18, 6.43, 8.46. See also Paul the Deacon, *Historia Langobardorum* 3.21.

5 Isidore, *De viris illustribus* 28 says about his brother Leander: "Leander whose father was Severian and was born in the Spanish province of Carthaginiensis was a monk by profession and from being a monk was made bishop of the the church in Seville in the province of Baetica" ("Leander, genitus patre Seueriano, Carthaginiensis prouinciae Hispaniae, professione monachus et ex monacho Hispaliensis ecclesiae prouinciae Baeticae constitutus episcopus"). From this, most scholars deduce his origin as being from Carthaginiensis. Roger Collins, *Visigothic Spain 409–711* (Oxford: 2004), 154, however, interprets in a different way the

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and a sister, Florentina, the addressee of *On the training of nuns and the contempt of the world*.

Leander was probably around 14–16 years old when he left his *terra natalis* with his family and settled in Seville or in a territory close to the capital of the province of Baetica.[6] The causes and the date of the family's departure from Carthaginiensis have been debated by scholars. Based on Leander's words to his sister Florentina advising her not to return to her homeland, which had apparently been occupied by foreigners and had lost its fertility, the flight is usually located in the context of the civil war between the Visigoths Agila and Athanagild and the settlement of the Byzantines in the south-east of the Iberian Peninsula (*c*.552–55).[7] It has been argued that the family of Severianus supported the cause of Athanagild.[8] Another hypothesis is that Severianus and his family were expelled from Carthaginiensis by Agila because they and other

passage of Isidore: "by profession a monk from the province of Spanish Carthaginiensis, he was made bishop of Seville in the province of Baetica." Collins suggests an African origin for the family and remarks that Isidore and Leander have Greek names. In his *De institutione virginum* 31.9, Leander points out: "Do not fly from the nest the dove has built and placed her chicks. You are the daughter of Simplicity, born with the Dove as your mother. In your one person you will carry out the duties of a surfeit of offices. Look to the Dove as your mother, listen to the Dove as your guide and hold she who bears you through Christ by her daily acts of love, dearer than the mother who gave you birth" ("Noli ab eo auolar nido quod inuenit turtur ubi reponat pullos suos. Simpliciatis filia es, quae Turture matre nata es. In eadem una persona complurium necessitudinum uteris officio. Turturem pro matrem respice, Turturem pro magistram attende; et quae te Christo cottidie adfectibus generat, cariorem qua nata es reputa matrem"). From these words, some scholars, such as Jacques Fontaine and Pierre Cazier, "Qui a chassé de Carthaginoise Sévérianus et les siens? Observations sur l'histoire familiale d'Isidore de Séville," in *Estudios en Homenaje a don Claudio Sánchez Albornoz en sus 90 años* (Buenos Aires: 1983), 349–400, 353–69, have suggested that the name of the mother of Leander, Isidore, Fulgentius, and Florentina was Turtur. Fontaine and Cazier also argue that the forced departure from her land made Turtur to go deeper in her Catholic faith and that she became abbess of a monastery after Severianus's death. The hypothesis of the name of Turtur is, however, not accepted by all scholars, many of whom see the sense of *turtur* in this passage as allegoric. The legends that make Severianus duke or governor of Carthaginiensis and establish family links between Severianus, the Ostrogothic King Theodoric, Leovigild, Reccared, Hermenegild, Leander, and Isidore, through Theodora, completely lack verisimilitude; see: Lucas of Tuy, *Chronicon Mundi* 2.68, and José Carlos Martín, "Vita ss. Leandri, Isidori Hispalensis, Fulgentii Astigitani et Braulionis Caesaraugustani ep. (BHL 4810). Traducción," *e-Spania* 12 (2011). There is no clear evidence either for speculations that make Leander's mother a Visigothic Arian who had converted to Catholicism.

6 Domínguez del Val, *Leandro de Sevilla*, 22.

7 For the political context, with bibliography, see Luis A. García Moreno, "La Andalucía de San Isidoro," in *Actas II Congreso de Historia de Andalucía* (Córdoba: 1994), 3: 555–79.

8 See Luis A. García Moreno, *Leovigildo. Unidad y diversidad de un reinado* (Madrid: 2008), and García Moreno, "La Andalucía de San Isidoro."

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powerful families of the region supported the Byzantine Empire.[9] Finally, other scholars think that Severianus and his family left Carthaginiensis for religious reasons, because they disagreed with the policy of the Byzantine Empire regarding the Three Chapters.[10]

For whatever reason, the family ended up settling in western Baetica, in particular in the area between Hispalis (Seville) and Astigi (Ecija). In this territory, where presumably Severianus and his family had properties and/or powerful connections, they attained a position of great power and influence.[11] Leander and Isidore became bishops of the important bishopric of Seville, and the other brother, Fulgentius, became bishop of Astigi (Ecija).[12] Their sister, Florentina, also professed the religious life, probably in a monastery in the area.[13] It would have been very difficult for newcomers to hold onto such powerful positions if they did not have access to strong local connections, influence, and wealth, and if they were not very powerful themselves. Episcopal dynasties, where members of the same family hold relevant ecclesiastical positions and/or where the episcopal see of a city was passed from one member of the family to another in succession, were highly regarded. They were a sign of prestige, honour, and devotion. As a consequence, many powerful families aimed to become one of these acclaimed ecclesiastical families and to increase in this way their social power and influence. Apart from Leander and his family, we know

9 This is the main thesis of Fontaine and Cazier in "Qui a chassé de Carthaginoise." Martyn, *Saint Leander,* thinks that the cause of the flight of the family of Leander was an Arian Visigothic attack on Cartagena, and that Leander, Isidore, and Fulgentius ended up at Seville, whereas their parents and Florentina went to Carthage in north Africa.

10 See, with bibliography, Federico M. Beltrán, "San Leandro de Sevilla y sus actitudes político-religiosas (nuevas observaciones sobre su historia familiar)," in *Actas I Coloquio de Historia Antigua de Andalucía* (Córdoba: 1993), 2:335–48. For the Three Chapters controversy, the Spanish Catholic Church's attitude toward it, and its political and religious consequences, see Abilio Barbero, "El conflicto de los Tres Capítulos y las iglesias hispánicas en los siglos VI y VII," in *La sociedad visigoda en su entorno histórico* (Madrid: 1992), 136–67, and Margarita Vallejo, "Desencuentros entre el emperador Justiniano y las iglesias hispanas," in *V Reunión de Arqueología Cristiana Hispánica* (Barcelona: 2000), 573–83.

11 See García Moreno, "La Andalucía de San Isidoro," and Fontaine and Cazier, "Qui a chassé de Carthaginoise," 371, who remark that the family would have territories in the Baetica, as well as in Carthaginiensis, something that was very common amongst the rich and powerful aristocrats of the time.

12 García Moreno, *Prosopografía*, 99.

13 Leander, *De institutione virginum*; Fontaine and Cazier, "Qui a chassé de Carthaginoise," argue that Florentina was the abbess of a monastery of women, although we do not have any confirmatory evidence, nor Martyn's thesis, *Saint Leander*, 49, according to which Florentina professed first in a monastery in Carthage and afterwards became abbess of the convent of Saint María de Valle in Ecija.

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of other episcopal dynasties in the contemporary Spanish church: the brothers Justinian, Nebridius, Justus, and Eludius became, during Theudis's reign (531–48), bishops of Valentia, Egara (Tarrassa), Urgel, and probably Osca (Huesca). Bishop Paul (530–60), although of Greek origin, was succeed by his nephew Fidelis (560–71) in the bishopric of Merida in order to keep within the see the rich inheritance that Paul had received from wealthy locals. John (619–31) and his brother Braulio (631–51) were bishops of Sarragossa; their father, Gregory, was also a bishop of an unknown see.[14] In the same way that these episcopal dynasties played a significant role in their area of influence, Leander's family, with their relevant ecclesiastical offices, held great power and influence in western Baetica.

At an unknown date, Leander became a monk in an unknown monastery. Sometime before 579 he was named bishop of Seville, making him metropolitan of the province of Baetica, presumably with the support of the local nobility and/or the Visigothic monarchy.[15] The pivotal political role he developed in the following years may confirm this thesis.[16]

3 The Role of Leander in the Rebellion of Hermenegild

Seville, the city in which Leander, and after him Isidore, held the office of bishop, was the capital of the province of Baetica. It occupied an important strategic location and played a prominent political and religious role within the province. During the 5th century, the Sueves and Visigoths had disputed its

14 For Paul and Fidelis, see *Vitas sanctorum patrum Emeretensium*, book 4. For Justinian, Nebridius, Justus, and Eludius, see Isidore, *De viris illustribus* 20–1. For Gregory, John, and Braulio, see: Eugenius of Toledo, *Carmen* 21. See Pablo Fuentes, "Sucesión dinástica y legitimidad episcopal en la Mérida visigoda," *En la España Medieval* 35 (2012), 11–35. Episcopal dynasties are also documented in the 4th and 5th centuries with the Sabini in Hispalis, the Valerii in Zaragoza, Ireneus and Nundinarius in Barcelona, and the Priscillianist Symphosius and Dictinius in Astorga. See Ramón Teja, "Las dinastías episcopales en la Hispania tardorromana," *Cassiodorus* 1 (1995), 29–39.

15 For Leander as monk and bishop, see Isidore, *De viris illustribus* 28. Being a monk before becoming a bishop was regarded very positively in the late antique church: Claudia Rapp, *Holy Bishops in Late Antiquity. The Nature of Christian Leadership in an Age of Transition* (Berkeley: 2005); Andrea Sterk, *Renouncing the World yet Leading the Church: The Monk-Bishop in Late Antiquity* (Cambridge, Mass.: 2004). Scholars argue that the appointment of Leander as bishop of Seville would have taken place before Hermenegild's rebellion, which started in 579.

16 For royal support for Severianus and his family and the accession of Leander to the episcopacy of Seville, see García Moreno, *Leovigildo*, 110, and "La Andalucía de San Isidoro," 566.

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control, during which conflict they called on the support of powerful—and often opposed—local families.[17] Seville had been a key point of contention in the war of the early 550s between Agila (d. 555) and Athanagild (d. 567), and it was not long before it again became a point of disagreement in a broader struggle for power. In this conflict, Leander played a leading role.[18]

In 573, in order to prevent potential future disputes over the kingship, King Leovigild (d. 586) associated his two sons, Hermenegild (d. 585), and Reccared (d. 601), with him on the throne.[19] As part of his policy of consolidating and strengthening the Visigothic monarchy, Leovigild also agreed to the marriage of his two sons with princesses from the Merovingian kingdoms of Austrasia and Neustria. Thus, Hermenegild, Leovigild's eldest son, married Ingundis (d. 584), daughter of Brunhild (d. 613) and Sigibert (d. 575) and granddaughter of Leovigild's second wife, Goswintha (d. 589), the widow of Athanagild, one of his predecessors on the Visigothic throne. It seems that shortly after Hermenegild's marriage, Leovigild entrusted him with the government of a part of the Visigothic kingdom's territory in the south. Hermenegild took up residence at Seville, presumably the centre of this territory.[20] There, in 579, Hermenegild rebelled against his father and proclaimed his rule as sole sovereign of the Visigothic kingdom.[21]

The causes, purposes, and role of Leander in Hermenegild's rebellion have been the subject of much controversy and discussion.[22] According to the

17 For further discussion, see Purificación Ubric, *La Iglesia en la Hispania del siglo V* (Granada: 2004), 72–8.

18 García Moreno, "La Andalucía de San Isidoro"; García Moreno, *Leovigildo*.

19 John of Biclarum, *Chronicon s. a.* 573, 5. One of the Visigoths' "illnesses" was the struggle for power, which was especially cruel when the objective was the throne. Its virulence even drew the attention of foreign authors: see Gregory of Tours, *Decem libri historiarum* 3.30.

20 John of Biclarum, *Chronicon s. a.* 579, 2–3. For discussion of the territory assignee to Hermenegild and the supporters of his rebellion, with sources and bibliography, see García Moreno, *Leovigildo*.

21 García Moreno, "La Andalucía de San Isidoro," 565, suggests that, prior to the revolt of his eldest son, Leovilgild may have shown preference for his youngest son, Reccared, to whom he dedicated the city of Recopolis. Other scholars, such as Roger Collins, "¿Dónde estaban los arrianos en 589?" in *Concilio III de Toledo. XIV Centenario 589–1989* (Toledo: 1991), 211–22, give a later chronology to Hermenegild's rebellion, dating it to *c.*582–83.

22 Scholarly interpretations range from those who give Hermenegild a prominent position in the revolt against his father to those who introduce him as a puppet of Leander, the Catholic Church, his wife Ingundis, and/or Goswintha. To understand Hermenegild's rebellion it is very important to value, analyse, and point out the interests and positions of the several factions that took part in the struggle: the Visigothic clans, the Merovingian kingdoms, the Byzantine Empire, the Suevic kingdom, powerful noblemen, and the

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contemporary Spanish chronicler John of Biclarum, the conflict between father and son was initiated by domestic strife (*domestica rixa*). He also records under the year 579 that Hermenegild rebelled, with the "faction of Goswintha" (*factione Goswinthae*).[23] Gregory of Tours, who wrote about these events some years after they had taken place, also assigns to Goswintha a primary role, underlining her determination to force her granddaughter's conversion to Arianism.[24] The religious factor was, indeed, a pivotal component of the rebellion, as at some point Hermenegild converted from Arianism to Catholicism.[25] Ever since the Visigoths had first embraced Arianism around the mid-4th century, it had become a key sign of their identity, distinguishing them from the majority Catholic Roman population of Hispania.[26] When the Visigothic kingdom was created in the course of the 5th century the religious boundary between the two groups was still maintained. By Leander's time, however, there were some sectors on the Visigothic/Arian and on the Hispano Roman/Catholic side that were more open to a union of creeds within the kingdom.[27] It may have been the case that some groups saw the rebellion of Hermenegild as an opportunity to achieve this aim.

Church. For an overview of events, sources, and interpretations, with bibliography, see García Moreno, *Leovigildo*, and Santiago Castellanos, *Los Godos y la Cruz: Recaredo y la unidad de Spania* (Madrid: 2007), esp. 111–42, and 269–313.

23 John of Biclarum, *Chronicon s. a.* 579, 3.

24 Gregory of Tours, *Decem libri historiarum* 5.38. For the date and view of these events in Gregory of Tours, see Walter Goffart, "From *Historiae* to *Historia Francorum* and back again," in *Culture and Society in the Early Middle Ages: Studies in honor of Richard E. Sullivan*, eds. Thomas F.X. Noble and John Joseph Contreni (Kalamazoo: 1987), 55–76. For Goswintha as instigator, see García Moreno, *Leovigildo*, esp. 102–07, and Castellanos, *Los Godos y la Cruz*, esp. 114–16. However, Domínguez del Val, *Leandro de Sevilla*, 28, along with other researchers, thinks that Goswintha, a radical Arian, incited Leovigild to combat his Catholic son.

25 Scholars have also valued the significance of the religious component of the rebellion in a very different way, from those who think it was the crucial factor to those for whom it was something secondary, of no importance at all. See, for example, E.A. Thompson, "The Conversion of the Visigoths to Catholicism," *Nottingham Medieval Studies* 4 (1960), 4–35; Biagio Saitta, "Un momento di disgregazione nel regno visigoto di Spagna: la rivolta di Ermenegildo," *Quaderni Catanesi di Studi Classici e Medievali* 1 (1979), 81–134; Roger Collins, "King Leovigild and the Conversion of the Visigoths," in *Law, Culture and Regionalism in Early Medieval Spain* (Aldershot: 1992), 1–12.

26 See Luis A. García Moreno, "¿Por qué los godos fueron arrianos?" in *Tempus Implendi Promissa*, ed. Elisabeth Reinhardt (Pamplona: 2000), 187–207.

27 For the religious context, see García Moreno, *Leovigildo*, and Castellanos, *Los Godos y la Cruz.*

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Contemporary sources give several versions of the events surrounding the rebellion.[28] The Iberian sources written after the eventual conversion of the kingdom to Catholicism, such as John of Biclarum and Isidore of Seville, call Hermenegild *tyrannus* and completely downplay his conversion to the Catholic position and the role played by Leander in the rebellion.[29] Sources written outside the Iberian Peninsula, however, give a quite different view. Thus, Gregory the Great attributes the conversion of Hermenegild to the preaching of his friend Leander and presents Hermenegild as a martyr for the Catholic faith.[30] Gregory of Tours, a supporter of the Merovingians, attributed Hermenegild's

28 For an evaluation of the sources, see Luis Vázquez de Parga, *San Hermenegildo ante las fuentes históricas* (Madrid: 1973).

29 John of Biclarum, *Chronicon s. a.* 579, 3, and 583: "King Leovigild pinned down his rebel son in a great siege" ("Leuvigildus rex … rebellen filium graui obsidione concludit"). Isidore, for his part, says in his *Historia Gothorum* 49: "[Leovigild] then besieged and defeated his son Hermenegild who was attempting to usurp his power" ("Hermenegildum deinde filium imperiis suis tyranizantem obsessum exsuperavit"). Isidore, *De viris illustribus* 28, points out the outstanding role of his brother in the conversion of the Visigoths, but he does not mention anything about Hermenegild's conversion or the intervention of his brother in the revolt. In Isidore, as in other Iberian sources, all the credit for the conversion of the Visigoths to the Nicene faith goes to Reccared. This was not the first time the sources silenced the conversion of a barbarian king to Catholicism with the purpose of extolling a rival king's conversion, Purificación Ubric, "The Church in the Suevic Kingdom (A.D. 411–585)," in *Culture and Society in Medieval Galicia: A Cultural Crossroads at the Edge of Europe*, ed. James D'Emilio (London: 2015), 210–43.

30 Gregory the Great, *Dialogus* 3.31. Gregory the Great is the author who gives the most positive view of Hermenegild, probably because his main source of information was his close friend Leander. He could also have had other sources, as he points out "as we have learnt from the accounts of the many people who have come from Spain" ("sicut multorum qui ab Hispaniis partibus ueniunt relatione cognouimus"). When Gregory wrote of the martyrdom of Hermenegild, Reccared had been ruling the Visigothic kingdom for around eight years. Gregory attributes the conversion of his brother to Hermenegild's mediation. This information might, however, be understood in the context of the struggle between East and West and the role developed by martyrs in it. It is not politics that mattered here but religion, and to introduce Hermenegild as a martyr of the Catholic faith served this purpose, Castellanos, *Los Godos y la Cruz*, 120–22. It is very significant that the first Iberian author that judges Hermenegild as a kind of martyr is the monk Valerius of Bierzo (a figure usually understood as opposed to established ecclesiastical authority) in his *De uana saeculi sapientia* 6, which was written at the end of the 7th century. It was not until the 16th century, during the reign of Philip II (1556–98), who was zealously concerned with magnifying the figure of Hermenegild as a Catholic martyr and saint, when Hermenegild received recognition for his martyrdom for the faith. Philip II indeed promoted his canonisation and brought his relics from Sigena to the Escorial. See Vázquez de Parga, *San Hermenegildo*.

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conversion to his wife, Ingundis (a Merovingian princess).[31] For Gregory of Tours, however, Hermenegild's Catholic faith did not justify the rebellion and usurpation of legitimate power from his (heretical) father. Gregory calls Hermenegild *miserable* and points out he will have to face God's judgement for having risen up against his father.[32]

Some scholars have argued that Hermenegild's rebellion was a usurpation of power on the part of the Balths—the clan of Goswintha's previous husband—to Visigothic rule. It is very significant in this regard that the son of Hermenegild and Ingundis was called Athanagild, like his grandfather.[33] We must not forget that, according to some scholars, Severianus and his family had supported Athanagild, and their loyalty had been rewarded with, among other things, Leander's promotion to the episcopacy of Seville.[34] If these two interpretations are correct, then Leander's support for Hermenegild in opposition to other powerful noblemen and ecclesiastics can be interpreted as a continuation of earlier cooperation between an elite Hispano-Roman Catholic family and one of the dominant groups within the Visigothic aristocracy.

Leander might have acted as a kind of personal advisor of Hermenegild. The "propaganda" efforts of Hermenegild and the formulation of his rebellion as a religious persecution have even been attributed to Leander.[35] Very significant in this respect is the way that Hermenegild presents himself, claiming God's

31 Gregory of Tours, *Decem libri historiarum* 5.38. García Moreno, "La Andalucía de San Isidoro," 566, n. 61, refers to a manuscript version of Isidore's *Historia Gothorum* (MS of the Academia de la Historia de Madrid, A-189, 12th century) where the conversion of Hermenegild is attributed to both, to his wife and to Leander: "in part due to his wife's lecturings and in part due to Leander's preaching" ("partium uxoris moneritis, partium Leandri predicatione").

32 Gregory of Tours, *Decem libri historiarum* 5.38, 6.18, and 6.43. Gregory of Tours' references to Leovigild and to Hermenegild's revolt and conversion lack historical reliability, as his purpose is mainly apologetic. He wrote after the events and his chronology is not accurate, García Moreno, *Leovigild*, esp. 102–07, 112, and Castellanos, *Los Godos y la Cruz*, esp. 114–16.

33 The baby was born shortly after their marriage (*Epistolae Austrasicae* 27 and 28), and for some scholars would be the trigger of the rebellion, not the conversion of Hermenegild to Catholicism, as other authors point out. García Moreno, *Leovigildo*, 117–18, remarks that Hermenegild's conversion to Catholicism would not enter into the plans of the fervent Arian Goswintha. It would put into opposition her and the Goths who supported her and would diminish support for Hermenegild's rebellion.

34 According to García Moreno, *Leovigildo*, 22–3, n. 15, the entry of John of Biclarum, *Chronicon s. a.* 585.7 in relation to Leander's splendour: "Leander, the bishop of the Church of Seville, was held in high esteem" ("Leander Hispalensis ecclesiae episcopus clarus habetur") may refer to Leander's opposition to Leovigild, in the same way as other entries on prominent Catholic ecclesiastics.

35 See García Moreno, *Leovigildo*, 111, and Beltrán, "San Leandro de Sevilla."

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sanction for his usurpation.[36] This has been interpreted as part of a broader attempt by Hermenegild and Leander to secure the support of powerful Catholic allies, including the Byzantine Empire, the Suevic kingdom, and Catholic sectors of the Spanish church and nobility.[37]

In effect, it is likely that Hermenegild knew that his father's forces were stronger than his own. He therefore needed the assistance that these Catholic parties, in particular the Byzantine Empire, could provide. It was therefore with the intention of obtaining the support of the Byzantines that Leander travelled to Constantinople sometime between 579 and 586.[38] Gregory the Great, who was at that time in the capital of the Byzantine Empire as papal

36 Illustrative in this regard is the inscription "God grant long life to the king" (*Regi a Deo Vita*), which appears on Hermenegild's coins. For interpretations of Hermenegild's coins, see Felipe Mateu y Llopis, "En el XIV centenario de *Hermenegildus rex*. La pugna de 574–585 testimoniada por los tremises godos," *Numisma*, 186–91 (1984), 189–94, and Manuel C. Díaz y Díaz, "La leyenda *Regi a Deo Vita* de una moneda de Ermenegildo," *Analecta Sacra Tarraconensia*, 31 (1958), 261–69. Further evidence of Hermenegild's propaganda effort is an inscription found in Alcalá of Guadaira, see Concepción Fernández Martínez and Joan Gómez Pallarés, "Hermenegildo, ¿para siempre en Sevilla? Una nueva interpretación de IHC, n. 76=ILCV n.50," *Gerión* 19 (2001), 629–58. The epigrapher A. Stylow, however, thinks that the inscription may be a falsification of the 16th century designed to promote Hermenegild's sanctity, García Moreno, *Leovigildo*, 111, n. 274. This formula, as well as other elements of Hermenegild's "propaganda," are very similar to descriptions of Reccared's rule at the Third Council of Toledo, where Leander had a very active role, García Moreno, *Leovigildo*, 113–15.

37 Gregory of Tours, *Decem libri historiarum* 5.38, 6.18, and 6.43. The Suevic king Miro sent an army to support Hermenegild, which was defeated by Leovigild, John of Biclarum, *Chronicon s. a.* 583, 1, and Gregory of Tours. *Decem libri historiarum* 6.43. It is worth noting that Hermenegild would not have been able to count on the support of all of the powerful Catholic families, even in those areas that were the focus of his rebellion (Lusitania and Baetica). Many of them would have viewed him as tyrannous.

38 For Leander's trip to Constantinople, purposes, analysis, documentation, and bibliography, see Margarita Vallejo, *Hispania y Bizancio. Una relación desconocida* (Madrid: 2012), 249–50, Castellanos, *Los Godos y la Cruz*, and García Moreno, *Leovigildo*, 117–20 (who claims prior contact between Hermenegild and the Byzantine governor of Hispania and points out that the long stay of Leander in Constantinople may indicate that there were difficulties in reaching an agreement). The dates of Leander's journey and stay in Constantinople are based on several pieces of information. First, in 579 Hermenegild started his rebellion against his father, so Leander could not have been at Constantinople before that year. Second, in 586 Leovigild died, and according to Gregory the Great (*Moralia In Job*, praefatio), Leander was back by this time. Additional pieces of evidence are the stay of Gregory the Great in Constantinople from 579 to 586, during which time he developed a close friendship with Leander, and the fact that in the imperial capital Leander also met John the Faster (Isidore, *De viris illustribus* 25), who was patriarch from 582 to 595. In Constantinople Leander may have met the Emperor Tiberius, his successor Maurice, or both of them.

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emissary, tells us that Leander came to Constantinople "on an embassy from the Visigoths, charged with dealing with a number of matters of Christian faith."[39] It seems that the Byzantine Empire promised some kind of help, but with priorities in other places and facing a delicate economic situation, Leovigild's offer of 30,000 *solidi* in return for neutrality was greeted positively by the imperial authorities. Ultimately, therefore, Leander's journey to Constantinople was in vain.[40]

In order to end his son's revolt, Leovigild deployed, in addition to a wide range of military and diplomatic resources, a considerable religious and ideological counteroffensive, which had among its aims the unification of Catholics and Arians under the same creed.[41] Thus, shortly after Hermenegild's conversion, in 580, Leovigild called Arian bishops to a council, which tried to smooth over differences between the faiths by aligning their theological positions. At this council some requirements to convert from Catholicism to Arianism were simplified. One of these was the requirement of a ceremony of rebaptism upon entry into Arianism, a procedure which was deemed as unnecessary in the future; a laying on of hands was henceforth enough.[42] Leovigild also focussed on linking the Catholic Church to the Visigothic monarchy. He sought to establish a kind of national Gothic church that was opposed to the Roman-Byzantine church that supported Hermenegild and was considered heretical

39 Gregory the Great, *Moralia In Job*, praefatio, trans. John R.C. Martyn, *Gregory and Leander: An Analysis of the Special Friendship between Pope Gregory the Great, and Leander, archbishop of Seville* (Newcastle: 2013), 4.

40 Gregory of Tours, *Decem libri historiarum* 5.38, 6.18, and 6.43. For the political context and Byzantine support for Hermenegild, see Walter Goffart, "Byzantine Policy in the West under Tiberius II and Maurice: The Pretenders Hermenegild and Gundovald (579–585)," *Traditio* 13 (1957), 73–118, who at p. 90 argues that the Byzantine emperor may have given some financial (but not military) support to Hermenegild. Other scholars have related the switch of the Byzantine policy to the accession of Emperor Maurice (Tiberius died in 582), Vallejo, *Hispania y Bizancio*, esp. 249–56. It is difficult to date the moment in which Leovigild gave the *solidi* to the Byzantines and made an agreement with them. It seems likely that it would have been at a crucial moment in the dispute, when Seville had fallen into Leovigild's hands and Hermenegild and his family had taken refuge with the Byzantines, see García Moreno, *Leovigildo*, 157–58.

41 Contemporary sources offer contrasting appraisals of the reign of Leovigild. Whereas his policy of unifying the kingdom militarily is highly praised, the image of the monarch and of his religious policy is quite negative. On the religious counteroffensive of Leovigild, see García Moreno, *Leovigildo*, 127–37.

42 John of Biclarum, *Chronicon s. a.* 580, 2; Isidore, *Historia Gothorum* 50. The *libellus* in which the doctrine of the new church was formulated was condemned at the Third Council of Toledo (anathema 16), G. Martínez Díez and F. Rodríguez (eds.), *La colección canónica hispana*, 6 vols (Madrid: 1966–2002), 5:82.

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in the West due to its defence of the Three Chapters.[43] Leovigild furthermore took measures against key Catholic figures, such as Masona (d. 605), bishop of Merida. Later Catholic sources would present these actions as part of a wide-ranging religious persecution on the part of Leovigild.[44] To counter this offensive, which had managed to attract the support of some Catholic bishops, such as Vincent of Saragossa and Nepopis of Merida, Leander wrote three anti-Arian works, in which he exposed the Arian errors in the light of Catholic doctrine.[45]

After several years of struggle during which Leovigild established his dominance, Seville was besieged and taken in 584. Shortly afterwards, Hermenegild was captured by his brother Reccared's forces in Cordoba, in the basilica of S. Acisclus, where he had sought sanctuary. Finally, in 585 Hermenegild was murdered in Tarragona, probably with the consent of Leovigild and Reccared.[46]

His open support for Hermenegild compromised Leander's position. It is likely that he stayed in Constantinople and evaluated what to do next. This was later depicted as an exile by Isidore, who never refers to Leander's involvement with Hermenegild's rebellion.[47] Leander stayed in the imperial capital until the political and religious situation in the Visigothic polity changed. This did not take long.

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43 García Moreno, *Leovigildo*, 120–27, argues that the alliance and negotiations of Hermenegild with the Byzantine Empire would not have been viewed positively by the majority of the Catholic Church and the Hispano-Roman population, who considered the emperors as heretics due to their policies regarding the Three Chapters.

44 John of Biclarum, *Chronicon s. a.* 580, 2; Isidore, *Historia Gothorum* 50 and 55; Gregory of Tours, *Decem libri historiarum* 5.38. For Masona of Merida, see *Vitas sanctorum patrum Emeretensium*, esp. book 5. On exiles, see Margarita Vallejo, "Los exilios de católicos y arrianos bajo Leovigildo y Recaredo," *Hispania Sacra* 55 (2003), 35–47. For the debate on Leovigild's Catholic persecutions, García Moreno, *Leovigildo*, 124–25, and Castellanos, *Los Godos y la Cruz*, 126–33, and 204–12.

45 Isidore, *De viris illustribus* 28.

46 John of Biclarum, *Chronicon s. a.* 582, 3; 583, 1 and 3; 585.3; Gregory of Tours, *Decem libri historiarum* 5.38, 6.18, and 6.43. Scholars have questioned the veracity of the testimony of Gregory the Great, *Dialogus* 3.31, who attributes to Leovigild the death of his son Hermenegild (for bibliography and discussion, see Domínguez del Val, *Leandro de Sevilla*, 32–35). For the military counteroffensive of Leovigild, see García Moreno, *Leovigildo*, especially 127–73.

47 On Leander's exile, Isidore, *De viris illustribus* 28. The exile of Leander due to his opposition to King Leovigild has led to discussion and speculation, especially its location (Cartagena or Constantinople) and its dates. For some scholars, Leander travelled several times to Constantinople, first as ambassador of Hermenegild and secondly when exiled by Leovigild. Other scholars, as Beltrán, "San Leandro de Sevilla," and García Moreno, *Leovigildo*, think that, after the defeat of Hermenegild, Leander's stay in Constantinople became an exile. For discussion, see Domínguez del Val, *Leandro de Sevilla*, 41–6, and Castellanos, *Los Godos y la Cruz*, 124–29.

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4 Leander, Reccared, and the Third Council of Toledo

There can be no doubt that Reccared was the greatest beneficiary of the failure of Hermenegild's revolt, which eased his path to the kingship when his father died in 586. Contrary to what might be expected given the failure of Hermenegild, Reccared decided to turn around the religious policy of the Visigothic kingdom. In effect, he realised the best means of unifying the Visigothic and Hispano-Roman elements of the kingdom was not behind Arianism, as Leovigild had attempted without success, but by converting the Visigoths to Catholicism. In deciding on Catholicism, Reccared gained for his cause powerful supporters of Hermenegild, Leander among them.[48] According to Gregory the Great and Gregory of Tours, Leovigild himself had actually converted to Catholicism, possibly on his deathbed, where he entrusted Leander with the care and counsel of Reccared.[49]

It is not clear to what extent Leander was involved in the personal conversion of Reccared, which took place in 587, ten months after his ascension to the throne.[50] Reccared decided to act more cautiously than his brother had done.

48 For the policy of Reccared, which had among its aims to change old enemies into new allies, see Castellanos, *Los Godos y la Cruz*, esp. 143–65. Leander might have re-entered the Iberian Peninsula via Cartagena. In a letter written in 595 by Licinianus of Cartagena (*Epistola* 1) to Gregory the Great, Licinianus complains that Leander's stay in the city was too short and did not allow him to examine an unfinished copy of Gregory's *Moralia* that Leander had brought with him. Although it is not possible to give an exact date for these events, scholars relate them to the return of Leander from Constantinople. Thus, Josep Vilella, "Gregorio Magno e Hispania," *Studia Ephemeridis Augustinianum* 33 (1991), 167–86, argues that it was Leovigild who recalled Leander: the bishop of Seville was in a hurry to meet the king, hence his rush and his short stay in Cartagena. García Moreno, "La Andalucía de San Isidoro," 569–71, and García Moreno, *Leovigildo*, 34, n. 48, and 172–73, thinks that Leander returned after the death of Leovigild, at which point he decided to change sides and support Reccared against the Byzantine Empire. García Moreno bases his arguments on Leander, *De institutione virginum* 31, where he shows a very negative view of the Byzantines and concern about his brother Fulgentius, who was in Cartagena at the time of writing. It is also significant that Leander did not act as ambassador to the Byzantine Empire when Reccared needed one, in spite of his previous experience (although he would recommend his close friend Gregory for this mission, Gregory the Great, *Epistola* 9.229). In addition, the harsh Byzantine policy toward bishops in their Iberian territory might have encouraged them to collaborate with Leander and the Catholic Church.

49 Gregory the Great, *Dialogus* 3.31, and Gregory of Tours, *Decem libri historiarum* 8.46. This information has been questioned by scholars, many of whom do not consider it credible.

50 Isidore does not mention Reccared's personal conversion at all. According to John of Biclarum, *Chronicon s. a.* 587, 5, the king converted to Catholicism "With God's aid" (*deo*

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Thus, before making his conversion official and extending it to the entirety of the Visigothic population, the king took some measures to prepare the way. There were several meetings with the main representatives of the Arian and the Catholic churches to discuss key points of contention and to overcome potential resistance.[51] The council at which the official unification of Catholic Hispano-Romans and Arian Visigoths under the Nicene Creed would take place was also carefully planned.[52] We learn from John of Biclarum that Leander of Seville and Eutropius, abbot of the monastery of Servitanum (and later Bishop of Valencia), one of the most influential cultural and intellectual centres of Catholicism in the kingdom, were pivotal figures in the council and its preparations.[53] Scholars have noticed some similarities between Reccared's propaganda and policy and those of Hermenegild, which may indicate the influence of Leander.[54]

The Third Council of Toledo, held in 589, made official the conversion of the Visigoths to Arianism.[55] Reccared was presented as a new Constantine (d. 337)

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iuuante). Gregory of Tours, *Decem libri historiarum* 9.15, states that the conversion occurred because Reccared was "moved to repentance through God's mercy" ("conpunctus miseratione divina"). The same idea is recorded in the Third Council of Toledo. In his *Chronicon* Fredegar says that Reccared was baptised in private, and after him all the Visigothic Arian people, something defended by E.A. Thompson, *Los godos en España* (Madrid: 1971), 108 and 111. Re-baptism, however, was contradictory to the common practice for passing from Arianism to Catholicism, Third Council of Toledo, anathema 15, Martínez Díez and Rodríguez, *La colección canónica hispana*, 5:82. Some scholars, such as Domínguez del Val, *Leandro de Sevilla*, 54–65, attributes to Leander the conversion of Reccared. Others, like Manuel C. Díaz y Díaz, "Introducción general," in José Oroz Reta and Manuel A. Marcos Casquero, trans., *San Isidoro de Sevilla, Etimologías* (Madrid: 2004), 21, think it was the results of evangelisation by Abbot Eutropius, who collaborated closely with Leander in the council and its preparations, John of Biclarum, *Chronicon*, *s. a.* 590, 1.

51 John of Biclarum, *Chronicon*, *s. a.* 587, 5, and Gregory of Tours, *Decem libri historiarum* 9.15.

52 For the political context of the council, see Luis A. García Moreno, "La coyuntura política del III Concilio de Toledo," in *Concilio III de Toledo*, 271–96. For the conversion process, see Bruno Dumézil, *Les racines chrétiennes de l'Europe. Conversion et liberté dans les royaumes barbares V^e–VIIIe siècle* (Paris: 2005). See also Rachel L. Stocking, *Bishops, Councils and Consensus in the Visigothic Kingdom, 589–633* (Ann Arbor: 2000).

53 John of Biclarum, *Chronicon*, *s. a.* 590, 1. The monastery of Servitanum was founded by Abbot Donatus, who arrived in the Iberian Peninsula from Africa with seventy monks and a very well-stocked library, Ildefonsus of Toledo, *De viris illustribus* 3.

54 García Moreno, "La Andalucía de San Isidoro," 569; García Moreno, *Leovigildo*, 113–15.

55 The attention that John of Biclarum, *Chronicon s. a.* 590, 1, gives to the council in comparison to other entries in his chronicle is significant. The Third Council of Toledo has been viewed as a landmark in the history of Spain, often interpreted from a strongly nationalistic and Catholic perspective. Díaz y Díaz, "Introducción general," 24, n. 51, points out in this regard as very revealing in the book *El Concilio III de Toledo base de la nacionalidad y*

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and Marcian (d. 457), who had convened the Councils of Nicaea (325) and Chalcedon (451), respectively, presiding over a council that would be a benchmark for the future. The council itself was also presented as the heir to previous ecumenical councils.[56] Within a Byzantine-style ceremonial, King Reccared, together with Queen Baddo, the noblemen of the court, and the Arian bishops, confessed their conversion to the Catholic faith and their renunciation of Arianism.[57] Catholic bishops and abbots congratulated them with extreme joy. The council also laid the groundwork for the establishment of a truly unified church within the Visigothic kingdom, within which monarchy and episcopacy would collaborate side by side.

Leander seems to have played a leading role at the council. He delivered the closing homily, and some scholars attribute to him the authorship of most of its canons, as well as its liturgical, dogmatic, and disciplinary innovations.[58] Although the records of the council give the impression of a great celebration, reading between the lines, things were perhaps not so harmonious and friendly. Several pieces of evidence suggest that the alliance of monarchy and episcopacy for the sake of unity masked a situation of tension and disagreement, as both king and bishops benefitted and lost something from the new alliance.[59] The text of the council can be read to suggest a contrast between the image of King Reccared as the driving force behind the conversion and Leander's closing homily, which ignores the king completely and uses biblical and Patristic quotations to demonstrate the central role of Christ and his church in the conversion.[60] We must not forget that Leander and Reccared had recently been on

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civilización española (Madrid: 1891), with the conciliar texts in Latin, Basque, Arabic, Castilian Spanish, Catalan, Galician, and Portuguese. The bibliography on the Third Council of Toledo is overwhelming. For a general view, with several studies, see *Concilio III de Toledo*.

56 Reccared, in fact, signed the acts as *Flabius* (sic) *Reccaredus*. See Castellanos, *Los Godos y la Cruz*, esp. 212–33.

57 Baddo is the only Visigothic queen attested as signing the acts of a council. On Byzantine influence on the Third Council of Toledo's ceremonies, see, J.N. Hillgarth, "El III Concilio de Toledo y Bizancio," in *Concilio III de Toledo*, 357–74; Stocking, *Bishops, Councils and Consensus*, 59, n. 3, and Beltrán, "San Leandro de Sevilla," 347.

58 See, with bibliography, Beltrán, "San Leandro de Sevilla," 347. Further evidence of Leander's prominence in the council is the fact that he signed the acts of the council fourth, after the king and the bishops of Merida and Toledo.

59 Díaz y Díaz, "Introducción general," 26, argues that, during the negotiations with Leander and Eutropius, Arians and Catholics made concessions in order to achieve unity.

60 Reccared attributes to himself not just the merit of the conversion of the Visigoths, but also of the Sueves, who had already embraced Catholicism some decades before, Ubric, "The Church in the Suevic Kingdom." Scholars also remark on the tardiness with which Reccared communicated the conversion to Pope Gregory the Great, a close friend of

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different sides during Hermenegild's rebellion and that Reccared was implicated in his brother's death. It seems, however, that the ultimately strong desire of Leander and Reccared, as leaders of church and the royal government, to attain religious unity within the kingdom overrode any personal animosity.[61]

The silence of the Iberian sources on the thorny issue of Hermenegild's rebellion and conversion and their very positive view of Reccared and his kingdom could not hide the fact that not all Arian or Catholic sectors of the population agreed completely with their leaders' policy of religious unification.[62] Reccared had to face several rebellions led by powerful Arians in Merida, Narbonne, and Toledo before the council was held in 589.[63] The Catholic episcopacy were by no means unanimous in agreeing to the decisions of the Third Council of Toledo either, especially regarding the status of former Arian ecclesiastics within the Catholic Church, a debate that is revealed by the records of the Council of Saragossa, held in 592.[64]

Despite such early differences, on balance the alliance of monarchy and episcopacy seems to have had positive effects for both parties. From now on bishops would support a monarchy that became increasingly involved in the internal affairs of the Church. Over time, ecclesiastical decisions in councils

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Leander. For new readings of the texts, which show a very different view from the traditional vision of friendship between Leander and Reccared, see Joaquín Mellado, "Nuevas dudas sobre las relaciones monarquía-episcopado en la época de Recaredo," in *Actas I Congreso Nacional de latín Medieval* (León: 1995), 329–36; Joaquín Mellado, "Leandro y Gregorio Magno: ¿Sólo lecciones de humildad para la soberbia de Recaredo?" in *Actas III Congreso Hispánico de Latín Medieval* (León: 2002), 803–12; Joaquín Mellado, *La conversión de los visigodos y las relaciones Iglesia-Estado. Nueva lectura de las fuentes* (Córdoba: 2000); Antonio Gómez Cobo, *La Homelia in laude Ecclesiae de Leandro de Sevilla. Estudio y valoración* (Murcia: 1999). On Reccared's discourses, see Manuel C. Díaz y Díaz, "Los discursos del rey Recaredo: el *Tomus*," in *Concilio III de Toledo*, 223–36.

61 For the veiled allusions to the past in Leander's homily, see Gómez Cobo, *La Homelia in laude Ecclesiae*.

62 Reccared was not the peaceful, harmonious, and idyllic monarch sources have recorded. He acted with much cruelty to put an end to dissidence against his policy. See Navarra, "Interventi di Leandro di Siviglia," 131, and Gómez Cobo, *La Homelia in laude Ecclesiae*. On the manipulation and silence of the Iberian sources on this matter, see Castellanos, *Los Godos y la Cruz*.

63 See Castellanos, *Los Godos y la Cruz,* 153–65.

64 For the acts, see José Vives, ed., *Concilios visigóticos e hispano-romanos* (Barcelona: 1963), 154. See also Castellanos, *Los Godos y la Cruz*, 252–54, and Federico M. Beltrán, "El II Concilio de Zaragoza (592) y las últimas repercusiones de la crisis arriana en la Hispania visigoda," *Espacio, Tiempo y Forma, Historia Medieval* 3 (1990), 41–8. The status of repentant Priscillianists within the Church had also caused a sharp controversy in the Spanish church in the previous century: Ubric, *La Iglesia en la Hispania del siglo V*, 173–95.

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would have the force of civil law and bishops would take part in administering the fiscal apparatus of the state. The rulings of the council also seem to have been applied almost immediately after its celebration. Thus, Leander, as metropolitan of the province of Baetica, called a council in 590 in Seville, where Baetican bishops addressed problems regarding ecclesiastical patrimony and clerical chastity.[65] Key Catholic figures who had collaborated closely with the king were furthermore rewarded shortly after the council. Thus, the abbot Eutropius was consecrated as bishop of Valencia and John of Biclarum as bishop of Gerona.[66]

The conversion of the Visigoths to Catholicism also closed the confessional gap that, due to political and doctrinal issues, such as the Byzantines' posture towards the Three Chapters, had until that point existed between the territory in the hands of the Byzantines and the Catholics in the Visigothic kingdom. Some bishops who were close to Leander, such as Severus of Malaga and Licinianus of Cartagena, were suspected of disloyalty by the Byzantine Empire. In fact, Licinianus may have been poisoned in Constantinople in 602, where he had been called to give an explanation of his actions. Another means of counteracting the potential sympathy of the ecclesiastical hierarchy of the church in Byzantine territory for the newly Catholic Visigoths was through the appointment to the episcopate and the clergy of persons favourable to the imperial cause.[67]

In short, Leander was one of the main manufacturers of the united Visigothic Catholic kingdom, in which monarchy and episcopacy would collaborate towards the same goal, to create and strengthen the Visigothic Catholic monarchy. His brother, Isidore, would take this work even further.

5 Leander and Gregory the Great

As mentioned above, Leander and Gregory met sometime between 579 and 586 in Constantinople, when both of them were participating in diplomatic missions—Gregory as ambassador of the papacy, and Leander as Hermenegild's

65 Canon 18 of the Third Council of Toledo stipulates the meeting of a council every year in a place chosen by the metropolitan. For the acts of the First Council of Seville, see Vives, *Concilios visigóticos*, 151–53.

66 See García Moreno, *Prosopografía*, 147 (Eutropius), 213–14 (John of Biclarum).

67 For Licinianus, see Isidore, *De viris illustribus* 29. See Federico M. Beltrán, "El conflicto por la primacía eclesiástica de la Cartaginense y el III Concilio de Toledo," in *Concilio III de Toledo*, 497–510; García Moreno, "La Andalucía de San Isidoro," 569–71; García Moreno, *Leovigildo*, 34, n. 48, and 172–73.

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envoy.[68] At the imperial capital, Leander and Gregory established an intimate and lasting friendship.[69] It seems that they encouraged one another in their works. Thus, at Leander's request, Gregory wrote one of his major works, the *Moralia in Job* (*Commentary on Job*).[70] Leander returned to the Iberian Peninsula from Constantinople with a draft of the work.[71] Later on, in 595, Gregory again sent Leander part of his *Moralia*, together with a letter and a copy of his *Regula Pastoralis*.[72] Gregory's influence can also be clearly traced in Leander's writings.[73]

When Gregory became pope, he and Leander exchanged several letters. Four from Gregory to Leander, dated in 591, 595, and 599, have survived.[74] The letters from Leander to Gregory are no longer extant. Gregory's letter in which he shares with Leander his deepest personal and spiritual concerns, shows the closeness, trust, and appreciation that they professed for each other.[75] Gregory's confidence in Leander was recognised by sending him the *pallium*, a relic that had been in contact with the body of St Peter and blessed during his feast. This gift probably granted Leander status of vicar of the apostolic see in Spain.[76]

From Leander, Gregory would presumably have been aware of political and religious affairs in the Iberian Peninsula, such as Hermenegild's pretensions,

68 See note 38.

69 For the relationship between Leander of Seville and Gregory the Great, see Martyn, *Gregory and Leander*, with translations of Gregory's letters to Leander. For the correspondence and relationship between Gregory and Hispania, see also, with bibliography and sources, Jamie Wood, "A family affair: Leander, Isidore and the legacy of Gregory the Great in Spain," in *Isidore of Seville and his reception in the early Middle Ages: Transmitting and transforming knowledge*, eds. Andrew Fear and Jamie Wood (Amsterdam: 2016), 31–56, Vilella, "Gregorio Magno e Hispania," José Orlandis, "Gregorio Magno y la España visigoda bizantina," in *Homenaje a D. Claudio Sánchez Albornoz*, 329–48, and Domínguez del Val, *Leandro de Sevilla*, 47–53.

70 Gregory, *Moralia In Job*, praefatio, recognised it in the prologue of the work, which was dedicated to Leander. See also Paul the Deacon, *Vita Gregorii papae* 8.

71 Licinianus of Cartagena, *Epistola* 1.6.

72 Gregory the Great, *Epistola* 5.53. The copy of Gregory's *Regula Pastoralis* was presumably in the episcopal library at Seville, as Isidore, *De viris illustribus* 27, refers to its content. Licinianus of Cartagena, *Epistola* 1.1, also knew this work and had a copy.

73 Gómez Cobo, *La Homelia in laude Ecclesiae*.

74 Gregory the Great, *Epistolae* 1.41 (April 591); 5.53 (July 595); 9.228 (July 599). The preface to the *Moralia in Job* is also a letter to Leander, trans. Martyn, *Gregory and Leander*, numbered it 5.53a, and dated it to July 595.

75 For words and expressions which denote this closeness and affection, see Martyn, *Gregory and Leander*.

76 Gregory the Great, *Epistolae* 9.228 and 9.229. Gregory communicated his decision to Leander and King Reccared in the letters sent via the abbot Cyriacus in 599. See Vilella, "Gregorio Magno e Hispania."

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the conversion of Reccared and the Visigoths to Catholicism, and the controversies within the church there. Gregory indeed heard first of the conversion of Reccared and the Arian Visigoths not from the king but from Leander. Reccared would not communicate it personally to Gregory until sometime later.[77] Moreover, from Gregory's *Ep.* 1.41 we learn that Leander had asked Gregory for advice on a controversy within the Spanish Church on the use of single or triple immersion during baptism.

Leander also seems to have been a key connection between the Visigothic monarchy of Reccared and the apostolic see, enabling him to play a balancing role in their delicate political relationship with the Byzantine Empire. Thus, in one of his letters to the pope, Reccared asked Gregory for a copy of the treaty between Justinian and Athanagild, in which Byzantine possessions in the Iberian Peninsula were established. Gregory answered him diplomatically, ignoring Reccared's petition and stating that the document had been lost in a fire.[78] The role of Leander in the relationship between Gregory and Reccared and the high esteem both had for Leander is shown in Gregory's introduction of Reccared as the common son of Leander and of himself and in the praise that both pope and king lavished on the excellent qualities of the bishop of Seville.[79] Leander was also likely the link between Gregory and other influential Spaniards, such as the *clarissimus dux* Claudius.[80]

6 Works and Theology

Leander was not only notable for his work in the political and pastoral realms. He was also prominent in the intellectual and spiritual fields. In his *Chronicle* under Reccared's reign (586–601) Isidore states: "bishop Leander is considered outstanding in Spain for his knowledge and faith," and in a letter to his colleague Claudius he notes, "Remember the teacher we both had, Leander, and copy with all your might his orthodox faith" ("memento communis nostri

77 Gregory the Great, *Epistola* 1.41. The letter that Reccared sent to Gregory has been transmitted in the records of the Third Council of Toledo, text in Vives, *Concilios visigóticos*, 144–45.

78 Gregory the Great, *Epistola* 9.229.

79 Gregory the Great, *Epistolae* 1.41 and 9.229. For the letter of Reccared to Gregory, see Vives, *Concilios visigóticos*, 144–45.

80 On the relationship and correspondence of Reccared and other Spaniards with Gregory the Great, see Vilella, "Gregorio Magno e Hispania," and Castellanos, *Los Godos y la Cruz*, 306–13.

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doctoris Leandri, et eius fidem atque doctrinam pro uiribus imitare").[81] Isidore also dedicated to Leander the following verse: "You are certainly thought to rival the scholars of old, Leander, and your words prove this to teachers."[82]

Leander wrote several works. Only two of them, a treatise on virginity to his sister Florentina and the homily that closed the Third Council of Toledo, have survived. From them we learn that Leander had an excellent formation and education in classical, biblical, and Patristic studies, as well as in rhetoric. His Latin was fluent and elegant, and he was able to adapt his discourse to his audience, as is evidenced by comparison of the plain speech to his sister with the grandiloquent and majestic sermon at the Third Council of Toledo.

6.1 *De institutione uirginum et de comtemptu mundi*

On the training of nuns and the contempt of the world is a treatise addressed by Leander to his sister Florentina, probably on the occasion of her profession as a nun.[83] In this work, written in a very familiar, affectionate, and elegant style, Leander presents to his sister the advantages of espousing Christ, abandoning the world, and living a monastic and ascetic life.[84] After a long introduction praising virginity and its superiority to the worldly life of a wealthy young woman, there are thirty-one chapters in which Leander deals with a virgin's virtues, especially sobriety, temperance, charity, humility, and silence. He also gives precepts for religious and social life. The guidelines for monastic life are inspired by Tertullian and Cyprian, with contributions by Ambrose, Jerome, Augustine, Cassian, and Benedict of Nursia, and a number of personal touches from Leander.[85]

This text, which Isidore calls *libellus* in the *De viris illustribus*, has been transmitted as the "Rule of Leander" (*Regula s. Leandri* or *Regula virginum*).[86]

81 Isidore, *Chronica* 408a, trans. Sam Koon and Jamie Wood, "The Chronica Maiora of Isidore of Seville. An introduction and translation," *e-Spania* 6 (2008). Isidore, *Epistola ad Claudium ducem*, 12, *PL* 83 905, cited by F.J. Lozano Sebastián, *San Isidoro de Sevilla. Teología del pecado y de la conversión* (Burgos: 1976), 30.

82 Isidore, *Versus* 13, trans. Martyn, *Saint Leander*, 43.

83 For an overview with analysis of all the work's features, see Domínguez del Val, *Leandro de Sevilla*, 123–316.

84 The expressions used by Leander to address his sister are full of love and affection: *carissima* (dearest); *amantissima* (most loving); *soror quam diligo* (sister whom I love); *pergrata* (most delightful); *mea soror* (my sister), Martyn, *Saint Leander*, 52.

85 The thesis according to which Leander would have also based his work on Osius of Cordoba's *De laude uirginitatus* and Severus of Malaga's *Annulus* is not supported by many scholars.

86 For discussion on the literary character of the writing, a letter, a treatise, or a rule, with bibliography, see Oronzo Giordano, "Leandro di Siviglia: lettera alla sorella Fiorentina

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Manuscripts have preserved two versions of this work. One of them is short, at twenty-one chapters, and the other, first discovered in 1948, is longer and, according to scholars, more in line with the original. It included thirty-one chapters.[87]

The date at which Leander wrote this work has been subject of discussion. Based on the biographical information given in Chapter 31, it has been argued that Leander wrote it as a kind of spiritual testament at a moment when he feared for his own life or for the life of his brother Fulgentius, whom Leander had sent to his native land. Consequently, scholars have proposed a range of dates between 579 and 587, while Leander was in Constantinople.[88]

6.2 *In laudem ecclesiae / De triumpho Ecclesiae ob conuersione Gothorum*

As mentioned above, Leander delivered the closing homily at the Third Council of Toledo in 589. The sermon, which has been transmitted in the minutes of the council, is known as *In laudem ecclesiae* or *Sermon on the Triumph of the Church for the conversion of the Goths*.[89] This homily is a literary masterpiece in which Leander displays his command of rhetoric. It shows, furthermore, his excellent linguistic, literary, and religious formation. The sermon is a complex text full of biblical and Patristic citations. A thorough reading of the text reveals

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sulla verginità e fuga dal mondo," *Vetera Christianorum* 22 (1985), 105–19; Pedro Castillo, "Gastrimargia y abstinentia gulosa en la normativa monástica hispanovisigótica (I): Leandro de Sevilla," *Florentia Illiberitana* 13 (2002), 33–52, esp. 34–41, and Domínguez del Val, *Leandro de Sevilla*, 150–61.

87 The transmission of the text is very corrupt, which makes its study and translation very difficult. See Ángel Custodio Vega, "El *De institutione virginum* de San Leandro de Sevilla con diez capítulos y medio inéditos," *La Ciudad de Dios* 159 (1947), 277–394, José Madoz, "Una nueva transmisión del Libellus de institutione virginum de San Leandro de Sevilla," *Analecta Bollandiana* 67 (1949), 407–24. Martyn, *Saint Leander*, thinks the original version is 21 chapters, not 31, and that the ten of the long version were a later addition. In consequence, he only uses 21 chapters in his English translation of the text.

88 It has been proposed that this treatise was written sometime before Hermenegild's rebellion, during Leander's stay in Constantinople, when Hermenegild was defeated and Leander came back to the Iberian Peninsula or at the beginning of Reccared's reign. On the dates, see Domínguez del Val, *Leandro de Sevilla*, 123–26, and Fontaine and Cazier, "Qui a chassé de Carthaginoise," 393–95.

89 For the text, Martínez Díez and Rodríguez, *La colección canónica hispana*, 5:148–59. For a very thorough analysis, vocabulary, expressions, quotations, influences, structure, themes, and valuation, see Gómez Cobo, *La Homelia in laude Ecclesiae*. English translations by Martyn, *Saint Leander*, 135–49, and Barlow, *Iberian Fathers*, 229–37. It is worth noting that in his *De viris illustribus* Isidore does not mention this homily among the works of his brother; see Navarra, "Interventi di Leandro di Siviglia," 124, n. 4. This fact, together with other evidence, has led to some scholars to deny that it was written by Leander.

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the difficult negotiations between monarchy and episcopacy that took place before the conversion and attainment of unity, admonishing the king for taking credit for a conversion that properly belongs to Christ and his church.[90] The attribution to Leander of other parts of acts of the Third Council of Toledo, such as its liturgical, dogmatic, and disciplinary innovations, the anathemas, some canons, and in particular the *Tomus*, has not been substantiated satisfactorily.[91]

6.3 *Anti-Arian Writings*

According to Isidore, during his exile Leander wrote "Two books against the beliefs of the heretics" ("Duos aduersus haereticorum dogmata libros") and a "Pamphlet against Arian teachings" ("Opusculum aduersus instituta arrianorum"). In the two books against heretics Leander refuted the errors of the Arian heresy and corrected them through the doctrine of the Catholic Church, with a vehement style and very rich biblical erudition. The *opusculum* was written in the form of answers to Arian statements

> For here in the wanderings of his exile he composed two books against the beliefs of the heretics, richly endowed with the learning of the Holy Scriptures. In them he impaled in a vigorous style the impiety of the Arians, laying bare their depravity. For he revealed how the Catholic Church differed from them and how far they had departed from religion and the sacraments of the Faith. His admirable pamphlet against the teachings of the Arians also survives in which he sets out his replies to their beliefs
>
> (Hic namque in exilii sui peregrinatione composuit duos adversus haereticorum dogmata libros, eruditione sacrarum scripturarum ditissimos, in quibus vehementi stilo arrianae impietatis confodit ac detegit pravitatem; ostendens scilicet, quid contra eosdem habeat catholica ecclesia vel quantum distet ab eis religione vel fidei sacramentis. Extat et laudabile

90 According to Gómez Cobo, *La Homelia in laude Ecclesiae*, the Patristic influence and knowledge which appears in this work, mainly derived from Ambrose, Gregory the Great, Cassiodorus, and Augustine, was acquired by Leander from his friend Gregory the Great. For an analysis of the homily, see also Jacques Fontaine, "La homilía de San Leandro ante el Concilio III de Toledo: temática y forma," in *Concilio III de Toledo*, 249–69, and José Orlandis, "La doctrina eclesiológica de la homilía de San Leandro en el Concilio III de Toledo," in *Estudios de historia eclesiástica visigoda* (Pamplona: 1998), 123–28.

91 Gómez Cobo, *La Homelia in laude Ecclesiae*, however, argues that the documents related to the king in the council would not be the work of Leander, but of other ecclesiastical figures closer to Reccared's circle. See also Manuel Díaz, "Los discursos del rey Recaredo."

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eius opusculum adversus instituta arrianorum, in quo propositis eorum dictis, suas reponsiones opponit).[92]

These three Anti-Arian works were presumably composed in response to the religious policies of Leovigild, which, as we saw above, proved attractive to some Catholic bishops. Leander's writings asserted the truth of Catholic doctrine and the errors of the Arians. It seems that other ecclesiastics from the Spanish Catholic Church also contributed to discrediting Arianism, especially as it was reimagined by Leovigild in the early 580s.[93] Justinian and Eutropius of Valencia and Severus of Malaga are all recorded as having written anti-Arian tracts in the sixth century.[94] However, none of these anti-Arian writings, including those of Leander, is extant. Perhaps this was part of a kind of pact of silence made by contemporaries as they celebrated the conversion and the achievements of Reccared in the aftermath of the Third Council of Toledo in 589.[95]

6.4 *Letters*

Leander also wrote numerous letters. Isidore mentions two of them specifically: "To Pope Gregory concerning one baptism" and "To his brother in which he advises that no-one should fear Death" ("Ad Papam Gregorium de baptismate unam" and "Ad fratrem in qua praemonet, cuiquam mortem non esse timendam").[96] Although neither of these letters has survived, we can deduce part of the content of the one sent to Gregory from Gregory's response, dated to 591. This suggests that in his letter Leander had asked Gregory for advice on the controversial issue of baptism in the Spanish Church.[97] It seems that, due

92 Isidore, *De viris illustribus* 28.

93 The debates between Arians and Catholics, very well represented in the Iberian Peninsula during the 4th century by Osius of Cordoba, had acquired a new vigour in Leander's time, especially as a consequence of the arrival to the Iberian Peninsula of ecclesiastics and monks from North Africa, who brought with them writings and polemical style developed during disputes between Arian Vandals and Catholics, as well as during the Three Chapters controversy. For the sources related to the controversy between Arianism and Catholicism in Hispania, see Domínguez del Val, *Leandro de Sevilla*, 317–541. For the intellectual and cultural environment, see Castellanos, *Los Godos y la Cruz*, esp. 192–204, and Stocking, *Bishops, Councils and Consensus*, 54.

94 Isidore, *De viris illustribus* 30. Beltrán, "San Leandro de Sevilla."

95 Castellanos, *Los Godos y la Cruz*, argues that these theological works were not preserved on purpose, to not undermine the role of Reccared in the conversion of his kingdom to Catholicism.

96 Isidore, *De viris illustribus* 28.

97 Gregory the Great, *Epistola* 1.41. From Gregory's letters to Leander we learn that he sent him several letters, not just the one relating to baptism. See Domínguez del Val, *Leandro de Sevilla*, 76–80.

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to various practices and theological disagreements on baptism between Catholics and former Arians, some churches practised triple immersion and others single immersion and that this had created some confusion and controversy within the Spanish Church. Thus, former Arians with the support of some Catholics defended triple immersion, while other Catholics were in favour of single immersion. Both stances were justified theologically, and advocates of one position refused to accept the validity of the other. It was a subject on which the apostolic see had been consulted before, namely in 538 in a letter sent by Profuturus of Braga to Pope Vigilius.[98] Gregory replied to Leander that although both of these positions were correct, the best way to avoid misunderstandings with new Arian converts was to only use single immersion.[99] This issue, however, continued to cause sharp disagreements for decades, as canon six of the Fourth Council of Toledo of 633 reveals.[100]

Scholars discuss which brother was the addressee of Leander's second letter, "Ad fratrem in qua praemonet, cuiquam mortem non esse timendam." Some argue that it was Fulgentius, who was in danger in foreign territory, while others suggest that it was Isidore, who was threatened by Leovigild's siege of Seville of 583–584.[101] Isidore also says that Leander wrote very affectionate personal letters to his fellow bishops. He adds that although the form of these letters was not brilliant, they were full of firmness in thought.[102] None of these letters has survived.

6.5 *Liturgical Writings*

In the biography of his brother, Isidore records that Leander wrote a collection of prayers for the Psalter and composed numerous and heartfelt melodies for the Mass, hymns, and psalms.[103] Some scholars have suggested that some of Leander's liturgical production and ideas regarding Arianism could have been preserved in the anonymous Mozarabic *Liber psalmographus* and in Mozarabic literature more generally, which have reached us in manuscripts dated from the 8th to the 11th centuries.[104]

98 Canon 5 of the First Council of Braga; Vigilius, *Epistola*, Ch. 2, *PL* 84, 831A-B. See also Martin of Braga, *De trina mersione*.

99 Gregory the Great, *Epistola* 1.41.

100 Martínez Díez and Rodríguez, *La colección canónica hispana*, 5:189–93.

101 Leander of Seville, *De institutione virginum* 31. For Leovigild's siege, John of Biclarum, *Chronicon s. a.* 583, 1, and 584, 1 and 3. See also Domínguez del Val, *Leandro de Sevilla*, 102–03.

102 Isidore, *De viris illustribus* 28.

103 Isidore, *De viris illustribus* 28.

104 Jorge Pinell, *Liber Orationum Psalmographus. Colectas de salmos del antiguo rito hispánico* (Barcelona: 1972), esp. 93–4 and 129–65, attributes to Leander most of its compositions; José Aldazabal, "Doctrina eclesiológica del libro Salmógrafo. La Iglesia como *posesión*

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6.6 *Other Works*

The *Hispana,* a collection of papal decretals and records of church councils from the East, Africa, Gaul, and Spain, the first composition of which is attributed to Isidore, was, for Manuel Díaz, a work of Leander not of Isidore.[105] Although most scholars refute this hypothesis, some agree that it was probably first put together during Leander's episcopate.[106] The attribution to Leander of the *Sermon for the feast of St. Vincent martyr* (*Sermo in solemniis sancti Vicentii martyris*) also lacks solid foundations and is not generally accepted by scholars.[107]

7 Conclusion

When Leander died, sometime around 600–601, his brother Isidore not only became bishop of Seville and metropolitan of Baetica, but he also curated Leander's legacy. This legacy is vital to understanding Isidore's achievements.[108] Leander's words to his sister Florentina suggest that he had great affection for Isidore. Their parents had entrusted him with the education of his youngest brother, and it seems that Leander took this task seriously.[109] Isidore had at his

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adquirida por Cristo y *nave* de salvación," *Revista Española de Teología* 32 (1972), 32–5. These attributions to Leander however, are not thoroughly argued. For discussion, see Domínguez del Val, *Leandro de Sevilla*, 99–102.

105 For the *Hispana*, see the study and critical edition of Martínez Díez and Rodríguez, *La colección canónica hispana*.

106 See Manuel C. Díaz y Díaz, "Pequeñas aportaciones para el estudio de la *Hispana*," *Revista Española de Derecho Canónico* 17 (1962), 384–90. For discussion and bibliography, see Beltrán, "San Leandro de Sevilla," 348, n. 58, and Domínguez del Val, *Leandro de Sevilla*, 106–09.

107 See Enrique Flórez, *España Sagrada* (Madrid: 1860), 8:253–54, Baudoin de Gaiffier, "Sermons en l'honneur de S. Vincent antéireurs au x siècle," *Analecta Bollandiana* 67 (1949), 280–86, and Domínguez del Val, *Leandro de Sevilla*, 109–11.

108 The date is based on Isidore's *De viris illustribus* 28, which states that Leander flourished under Reccared (Reccared died in 601), and on the fact that Gregory the Great sent Leander the *pallium* of St Peter in 599. According to Gregory's letter to Leander in that year, Leander was severely affected by gout (Gregory the Great, *Epistolae* 9.228 and 9.229). An inscription (not very reliable), which records the epitaph of Leander, Fulgentius, and Isidore in the place where they were buried, sets Leander's death on 14 March 602, José Vives, *Inscripciones cristianas de la España romana y visigoda* (Barcelona: 1969), no. 272, and José Carlos Martín, "El Epitaphium Leandri, Isidori et Florentinae (ICERV 272) o la compleja transmisión manuscrita de un texto epigráfico. Nueva edición y estudio," *Euphrosyne* n. s. 38 (2010), 139–63. On Leander's death dates, see Jacques Fontaine, *Isidore de Séville. Genèse et originalité*, 91 and 113, and Domínguez del Val, *Leandro de Sevilla*, 113–14.

109 Leander of Seville, *De institutione virginum* 31. On the formation of Isidore, see Díaz y Díaz, "Introducción general," esp. 72–105.

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disposal the very well-stocked episcopal library of Seville, which Leander had enriched with works by Gregory the Great and other eminent authors.[110] The intellectual and theological influence of Leander on his brother is evidenced by some similarities between their monastic rules.[111] Leander, furthermore, probably encouraged Isidore to write some of his most notable works, like *On the Offices of the Church*, and Isidore probably continued some projects initiated by his brother, such as the collection of papal decretals and records of church councils contained in the *Hispana*.[112]

Due to his close association with Leander, Isidore would have first-hand experience of many of the facets of episcopal office and it is likely that he was present at some of the crucial moments in the episcopacy of Leander. Leander also likely provided Isidore with connections to outstanding ecclesiastical and political figures of his time.[113] Due to all of these contexts, Isidore would carry on the policy of close collaboration between monarchy and episcopacy initiated by his brother, working for the Visigothic kingdom and its Church, and generating the ideological foundations that justified their close collaboration.[114]

The undoubted close association between Leander and Isidore contrasts with the laconic references Isidore dedicates to his brother in his own writings. In Isidore's writings, much of Leander's prominent political activity is not mentioned. Isidore's silence and his attempt to obscure his brother's role in the turbulent recent past are not, however, an impediment to appreciating Leander's contemporary importance and the profound influence that he had on the establishment of a united Catholic Visigothic kingdom and on his brother's intellection and pastoral formation.

110 Isidore refers to Gregory the Great at *Versus* 14 and *De viris illustribus* 27, where he mentions Gregory's *Regula Pastoralis*, which the pope had sent to Leander (Gregory the Great, *Epistola* 5.53).

111 See Campos and Roca, *Reglas monásticas*, 46 and 425–27.

112 Martyn, *Saint Leander*, 12, Díaz y Díaz, "Pequeñas aportaciones," and Domínguez del Val, *Leandro de Sevilla*, 106–09.

113 The connections of Leander were extensive, including Gregory the Great, Reccared, and other important ecclesiastics from across the Iberian Peninsula, such as Licinianus of Cartagena.

114 Garcia Moreno, "La Andalucía de San Isidoro," 579, points out that Isidore, however, did not reach the outstanding political role of his brother in the Visigothic kingdom, maybe because he was too young for these affairs when he became bishop.

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PART 2

Themes in Isidore's Works



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CHAPTER 5

Isidore of Seville as a Theologian

Thomas O'Loughlin

1 Introduction: The Appropriateness of the Notion of "Theologian" as a Unifying Concept over the Range of the *corpus Isidorianum*

If we seek to find a unifying factor in the vast literary output of Isidore, bishop of Seville, then the modern designation of "theologian"—someone who seeks to articulate a vision of the universe, human history, and human aspirations from within a specific religious tradition—probably comes closest. It is a title that he would not have recognised, for it presumes the division of knowledge by way of university faculties that arose centuries later, but it will be used in this chapter as the term that allows us to see common themes running throughout his work as well as to appreciate some of his more specific contributions to the Western intellectual tradition.[1] Isidore himself would possibly have preferred some term akin to *magister*: the person who took on the educational tasks set out by Augustine (354–430) as necessary for the church in his *De doctrina Christiana*. Alternatively, given Isidore's attitude to the "fathers" whose wisdom he arranged in convenient textbook style, perhaps he would have wanted to describe himself as a *discipulus* to the *magistri*.[2] However, in that he sought to comprehend and codify the Christian inheritance, resolve its problems, and then communicate it effectively—especially in a school setting—he is truly a theologian, and possibly the first Latin writer who consciously adopted that attitude to the tradition he had received that we see in its fullest form with writers such as Abelard (1079–1142/3) in his *Sic et non* and Hugh of Saint-Victor (d. 1142) in his *Didascalicon*.

1 Isidore does, of course, refer to *theologi* in the *Etymologiae*, but these are specific groups of pagan thinkers rather than individuals performing a specific task within the Christian church. At 8.6.18 the *theologi* are those Greek philosophers who wrote about God and about the nature of the divine, such as Dionysius the Stoic, or (at 8.7.9) those poets who wrote songs about the gods.

2 One need but look at the *apparatus fontium* in any modern edition of his works to see how he sought to identify and combine what he imagined as the quotations from the fathers on particular texts or questions and thus form an authoritative resource for those who came after him. On Isidore's sense of being but the most recent moment in a tradition, the disciple of those older writers who taught with authority, see Thomas O'Loughlin, *Teachers and Code-Breakers: The Latin Genesis Tradition, 430–800* (Turnhout: 1999), 157–205.

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However, while it is arguable that Isidore was a major influence on the form of subsequent theology in the West, it is certain that he does not belong to the West's own perception of its theological history because he is not seen as a theological genius, as is the case with Augustine, or a technical master, such as Jerome (*c*.345–420), or a profound influence on Western spirituality, such as John Cassian (*c*.360-after 430). So, can we see Isidore as having been in any way innovative or creative theologically? A few decades ago the answer would have been a clear "no"—only those with significant and recognisably different ideas could enter the canon of "important Latin theologians". In this view the first figure worthy of attention after Augustine was Anselm (*c*.1033–1109), with occasional claims for either Boethius (*c*.480–*c*.524) and/or Eriugena (mid-9th century), and, perhaps, Bede (*c*.673–735). Figures such Cassiodorus (490–*c*.580), Isidore, and any number of other writers were relegated to a lesser league of "writers" (rather than "thinkers") who are merely of interest to medievalists and historians of the transmission of European culture. Ironically, this still common neglect might have pleased some of these writers in that one of their expressed aims was that they would hand on their inheritance without innovation; but in the very means by which they sought not to innovate, they innovated.[3] The contemporary rationale for looking at Isidore as a creative theologian owes its origin to the awareness that no cultural message can be isolated as some ideal essence—an "idea" or a set of ideas—apart from its medium within specific human societies. It was commonplace among theologians in the early part of the 20th century to imagine theology as a set of true propositions, which had a particular shape only accidentally, that were true ahistorically, although they might not have been known at particular times or in certain places or to some individuals. In such a view the only appropriate question one could ask of Isidore, as a theological writer, was whether or not he provided evidence for the presence in his time of some controverted proposition: if he did, then that was to the good, while if he were "silent" on a particular matter then that was interpreted as simply a gap in his knowledge.[4] This approach was sometimes summed up in the notion that "theology has no history, only heresy [the result of deviant human action and innovation] has a history"—and, as we shall see, Isidore held a not dissimilar view.

3 O'Loughlin, *Teachers and Code-Breakers*, 273–96.

4 There is archetypal example of this in the treatment of Isidore in relation to the post-Tridentine Catholic teaching on the Eucharist in Juan Solano, ed., *Textos Eucaristicos Primitivos*, vol. 2: *Hasta el fin de la época patrística* (Madrid: 1952), 695–708. Solano assembles quotations from six works and presents them as being in perfect harmony with the earliest times and the most recent doctrinal statements: one can chart continuities while the changes of culture, ritual, or theology are all but invisible.

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Since the mid-20th century it has become increasingly common to recognise that the forms any cultural communication takes, and the values underlying it, are part of what is communicated; indeed, they may be more important than the formal information transmitted. Medium cannot be detached from "message," nor can a message be translated from one medium to another without the transformation of the message in that it now belongs within a different world. This development in semiotics has major implications for the history of theology because it is now recognised that the values that are implicit in the media and manner of doing theology not only shape the formulation of the message but function as the users' fundamental theological assumptions, and, in particular, the forms of communication usually are a close reflection of their understanding of the nature of revelation. So, for example, the storytelling form of the gospels highlights a narrative approach to revelation, the forensic disputes of the scholastics give a dominant place to the categorical proposition as the locus of religious truth such that revelation can be contained in propositions and faith is seen as assent to these, while the desire to provide structures for the arrangement of knowledge and compendia for its transmission reveal Isidore's notion of Christianity as an all-embracing system where every question can be answered with clarity and certainty. In being the first to present theological knowledge in this form, Isidore can be seen as one of the most significant theologians in the aftermath of the Roman Empire and one whose style of theology survived, in many places, until the 20th century. It is from this perspective on Isidore as an innovator—not of the "content" of doctrine but of how the nature of doctrine was conceived, how it could approached in the activity of teaching, and how "pieces" of doctrine could be assembled and used in larger arguments—that his status as a theologian should be evaluated.

2 Isidore's View of What a Good Theologian Should Be

Although Isidore did not produce works that explicitly reflect on what a Christian teacher does or should be doing,[5] we can see, indirectly, what he valued in theological teachers in his comments in his *De viris illustribus*.[6] In contrast to

5 It is significant that in Isidore's list of ecclesial actors dealt with in *De ecclesiasticis officiis* 2 there is no mention of a teacher or of a preacher, and that the act of teaching and having knowledge in relation to the scriptures ("scientia scripturarum necessaria est") is just one item among the duties of the bishop (2.5.16).

6 Carmen Codoñer Merino, ed., *El "De viris illustribus" de Isidoro de Sevilla: Estudio y edición crítica* (Salamanca: 1964).

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his exemplars in the genre, such as Jerome's book of the same title, Isidore's work rarely acts as a bibliography; he is more interested in teachers who have had an effect within the church's ambit than those who produced books. We see this in a simple analysis of those included: 27 bishops, 2 priests, 1 abbot, and 3 laypeople (one a woman). Teaching is perceived and presented as being a function of being an office holder in the church, pre-eminently the work of a bishop, rather than a function of individual genius, inspiration, or creativity.[7] Indeed, Isidore is more interested in the writers as saintly churchmen than as Christian writers per se; and given the tone of the book it would have been inconceivable to him that he could have included, as Jerome did, writers who were not orthodox Christians. While Isidore tells us the general area of each writer's work, on only a handful of cases can we identify the specific text being referenced and in even fewer cases is the title of the work included in his description. The inference seems clear: theology is a corpus of agreed knowledge embraced by individuals and transmitted rather than being a constellation of brilliant books by outstanding individuals.[8] There are certain recurring themes in entries. The most common is that the writer had opposed heresy, or a particular heresy, in some way, and there are two identifiable concerns under this broad heading. Firstly, a concern with those involved in reacting to what he saw as the web of Arianism, presented as denying the divinity of Jesus, which beset the church and led innocent people astray; and, secondly, the heresies which Isidore linked to those who queried various practices relating to baptism: the ideal church was to be uniform not only in teaching but in its practices. The second identifiable concern is with biblical exegesis where one bishop wrote on one topic and someone else on another – and we can presume that eventually we should have a complete set of commentaries; and, thirdly, a concern with penance and monastic practice. The predominant motif is that the Christian writer, a bishop, is one who must counter false teaching and defective practice. There is a tacit assumption that theology and orthodoxy are

7 The ideal teachers of the *De viris illustribus* mirror exactly the ideal bishop in *De ecclesiaasticis officiis* 2.5.13–17; indeed, one can view the *De viris illustribus* as Isidore writing for his fellow bishops on the doctrinal dimension of their duties using the form of "history being theology teaching by example."

8 It is interesting that Isidore never quotes Dan. 12:3—comparing teachers to brilliant stars in the heavens—and the only possible allusion to it (it may be to Phil. 2:15) interprets the stars of heaven "as, spiritually, the church which shines in the night of this life" (Isidore, *De natura rerum* 12.1). The collectivity, the church, is so much more significant than the actual teachers who compose it. See also: Jamie Wood, "Elites and Baptism: Religious 'Strategies of Distinction' in Visigothic Spain," in *Elite and Popular Religion*, eds. Kate Cooper and Jeremy Gregory (Woodbridge: 2006), 3–17.

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interchangeable terms, and that theology as such is a single integral and entire edifice. All teachers, whether in Greek or Latin, whether recent (such as Maximus of Zaragoza—the last writer mentioned—who writes in Visigothic Spain) or in the past (Hosius of Cordoba—the first entry), are proclaiming the exact same doctrine. Within this edifice of teaching there are no disputes between equally legitimate approaches or positions, nor are there any novelties: disagreements, over such matters as baptism or celebrating Easter, are the result of ignorance or weakness, and these problems are resolved by teachers who write clear answers to the problems. Likewise with exegesis, there is no hint that there are better or worse commentaries on particular books, but there are writers who address this or that text (Justus on the Song of Songs, Gregory the Great on Job) and thus provided the information that is needed. The various writers are conceivable as simply contributors to an encyclopaedia of theological truth that is at all times consistent, coherent, and potentially complete (some details may still need to be written up). So just as the only new work that has been noted in the *De viris illustribus* has been responses to threatening novelties (novelties, threats, heresies being also interchangeable terms), this is the only new work that will be required from teachers; for the most part they are to repeat and clarify a wholly known *depositum*.

3 A Theologian at Work

We see Isidore's belief that all the orthodox teachers expound the same doctrine, and so must be virtually in complete harmony with one another, in the way he approached scriptural exegesis. Exegesis, when allegorical methods predominate, is by its nature pluriform: having found one meaning, one can then find another, and the process has no natural termination. Hence we have "the forest of interpretations"[9] from early Christian writers with many exegeses of individual texts. Such open-endedness was not to Isidore's taste, with his desire for ordered teaching and fixed concise answers. We shall look at his theoretical answer to this issue when we look at how he attempted to create a systematic net for knowledge, but he also evolved a practical answer to it in his biblical commentaries.

9 The image is taken from the preface to the *Liber regularum* of Tyconius the Donatist; see Pamela Bright, *The Book of Rules of Tyconius: Its Purpose and Inner Logic* (Notre Dame: 1988), 36–37. On Isidore and Tyconius, see Henri de Lubac, *Exégèse Médiévale* (Paris: 1959), 43.

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No biblical book posed as many problems to the Christian theologians as Genesis, so this is the example to be examined here.[10] On one side it presented a history of the earth and humanity that contradicted that of Greco-Roman culture, while its account of human disobedience (both in Eden and before the flood) was often seen as the background to christology and the nature of Christian life. Isidore's work was to reduce the vast variety of material on this text—nearly half a dozen different commentaries from Augustine alone—to a fixed set of exegeses drawn from his authorities.[11] Viewed in terms of his sources, his commentary on Genesis is a chain of quotations (principally from Augustine, then from Ambrose (*c.*339–97) and Jerome, and then from other authors) with very few comments of his own.[12] Where he innovates is to divide the text into small units—sometimes this is a narrative unit and sometimes just a sentence—which are identified by lemmata in the commentary, and then to each such unit attach a snippet from his authorities. So the catena of events/statements in Genesis (A, B, C, D, E …) is paralleled by a catena of interpretations (a, b, c, d, e …) such that these are imagined as linked pairs (Aa, Bb, Cc, Dd, Ee …); and the unity and consistency of the biblical text is matched by the unity and consistency of the commentators used: the authorities by appearing not to conflict with one another convey to the reader the impression that the biblical text is itself unproblematic.[13] This method contained within it two hermeneutical implications that would have a profound effect on subsequent Latin exegesis and theology. First, that the biblical text, and indeed the whole of revelation, could be conceived as a set of interconnected propositions—susceptible to analysis as propositions and to being used in theological speculation as propositions such that any conclusion that resulted in a non-contradictory set of propositions was itself part of the *depositum fidei*—and secondly, that it was possible to hold that there was a single true interpretation of any passage of scripture, and so of the whole Bible, which could be ascertained by the ecclesial body of teachers (such as those bishops listed in the *De viris illustribus*). Isidore never explicitly embraced either of these implications of his method, but he probably grasped them in some inchoate way, and certainly he would not have been averse to them. That these implications were soon drawn out as basic elements in theology

10 For edition, see: Martine Dulaey and Michael M. Gorman, eds., *Isidorus Episcopus Hispalensis Expositio in Vetus Testamentum: Genesis* (Freiburg: 2009).

11 See Donald Jacob Uitvlugt, "The Sources of Isidore's Commentaries on the Pentateuch," *Revue Bénédictine* 112 (2002), 72–100.

12 This is clearly visible in the apparatus and *index fontium* of the edition by Dulaey and Gorman.

13 O'Loughlin, *Teachers and Code-Breakers*, 245–71.

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can be seen by those who came after and used Isidore, such as Julian of Toledo (fl. 667–90).[14]

Readers today view Isidore's writings on natural philosophy (e.g. *De natura rerum*) mainly as forming the basis of medieval science, but within Isidore's vision these works set out the background to the key doctrines of Christian belief.[15] But what is not apparent in them is the extent to which Isidore took differing solutions from earlier Christian writers and combined them to form a single position. The issue of whether or not there are "waters above the heavens" (Gen. 1:6–7) is a convenient example. On the one hand, the Bible is explicit that these waters exist, while on the other hand both classical cosmology and its underlying physics, that matter is arranged in the universe by weight, entertain no such notion. This conflict was complemented by another between Ambrose and Augustine on how to approach the problem where we find Augustine criticising and rejecting Ambrose's approach, albeit without naming his teacher.[16] Isidore not only ignored the classical–biblical conflict by presenting the biblical position as simply the "known facts," but combined conflicting elements from both Ambrose's and Augustine's answers to the problem as if they were consistent.[17] A parallel to this can be found in Isidore's treatment of the chronology of the first age of creation. There is no hint of Christians' embarrassment at their relatively short history of creation, and the biblically derived chronology is given as the only sequence of true dates. When he knows that there is a famous problem in his sources he adopts an attitude of simple declaration. So, for example, the problem relating to Methuselah's death (Gen. 5:25) *after the flood*—a conflict between the Greek and Hebrew/Vulgate texts—is mentioned without explanation,[18] and the problematic implication is then simply rejected:

> Enoch … gave birth to Methuselah, who is found to have lived, according to the series of years, for fourteen years after [the coming of] the flood. That is why there are some who have the false opinion (*falsa opinione*

14 Thomas O'Loughlin, "Julian of Toledo's *Antikeimenon* and the development of Latin exegesis," *Proceedings of the Irish Biblical Association* 16 (1993), 80–98.

15 O'Loughlin, *Teachers and Code-Breakers*, 197.

16 Thomas O'Loughlin, "*Aquae super caelos* (Gen 1:6–7): the first faith-science debate," *Milltown Studies* 29 (1992), 92–114.

17 O'Loughlin, Thomas, "The waters above the heavens: Isidore and the Latin tradition," *Milltown Studies* 36 (1995), 104–17.

18 O'Loughlin, Thomas, "The controversy over Methuselah's death: proto-chronology and the origins of the western concept of inerrancy," *Recherches de Théologie ancienne et medievale* 62 (1995), 182–225.

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> *existimant*) that he, along with his father Enoch who was "removed" (*translatus*), survived for a little while until the flood has passed by.[19]

By labelling problems as the results of false opinions, Isidore isolates the sacred text from the sphere of argument: the text itself is not problematic; the difficulties belong to the sphere of the human readers. When they have generated questions which could be seen as impinging on the text's credibility, then it is the readers who are at fault, and their questions and doubts can be marginalised as "false opinion." Just as Isidore's method of presenting exegesis can be seen as a key moment in the development of the propositional model of theology and of the logical model of theological development, his combination of human sciences (be that cosmology or history) with the biblical narratives can be seen as a major contributor to the related notions of the sufficiency of sacred text as a product of literal inspiration and of the inerrancy of the text both as a whole, and in its most simple detail where these could be expressed as propositions.

Isidore did not leave any treatise of these basic issues, but in the way he embedded these theological perspectives in a series of works which became core texts in teaching theology for the centuries after him, he can be said to have originated many of the basic principles both of systematic theology and of how the scriptures were approached theologically in the West until the 18th century. Viewed from this perspective, Isidore's many handbooks, such as the *De ortu et obitu patrum*[20] or the *In libros veteris ac novi testamenti prooemia*,[21] should be considered as much works conveying his theological vision as being handy repositories of curious knowledge. These are not just teachers' texts, synopses, and enchiridia, but distillations of the complexity of the inheritance; indeed, since Isidore has presented the conclusions of this library with

19 Isidore, *Chronica* 15; and compare with Isidore, *Expositio in Vetus Testamentum: Genesis* 30, l. 755–58. The notion of Enoch being "removed" is based on the text of Gen. 5:24 that "God took him" and, as Isidore refers to it, in terms of his not dying or being destroyed by the flood using the phrase *translatus* [*est*], we see the influence of Heb. 11:5: "Enoch was removed (*translatus est*) […] lest he see death" and Sir. 44:15: "Enoch pleased God and was removed (*translatus est*) into paradise." On the history of the problem—which Bede referred to as a "most famous question"—see O'Loughlin, "The controversy over Methuselah's death."

20 For edition, see: César Chaparro Gómez, ed., *Isidoro de Sevilla: De ortu et obitu patrum* (Paris: 1985), and note his comments on the authenticity of the text at p. 35.

21 A critical edition of this work can be assembled from the portions provided in sequence, Donatien De Bruyne, *Prefaces to the Latin Bible* (Turnhout: 2015); not only is this a better text than that found in PL 83, 155–80, but it shows the importance of this work in the actual reading of the scriptures and in exegesis over a long period of time.

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brevitas, to an extent his synopses can replace the books of ancients: the *compendium* (literally: a short cut) bypasses the very ancients whose writing have authority and deserve respect!

Reading a work like the *Prooemia* one is not given a mere one-paragraph introduction, and we know that it was read in this way from the manner in which it was excerpted in biblical codices, but a particular viewpoint for locating anything further that might be read. Moreover, in many cases, since one knows the answer to the problem, the speculation that led up to that position can now be considered redundant.[22] Why, for example, should one read the long discourses on the "waters above" in Ambrose's *Exameron* or the very complex treatment of the topic in Augustine's *De Genesi ad litteram* when all around are agreed about the frame of the universe, and the most valuable insights from each of those great saints have been arranged under the correct lemma in Isidore's commentary?[23] Isidore's textbooks witness his great skill as an assembler of information, his admiration for such qualities as *brevitas*,[24] and his awareness of the scholastic needs of post-Roman Europe, but they also witness his deeper convictions about the integrity and completeness of Christian knowledge. He, the Christian bishop, is the ideal reader of any book, pagan or Christian, and so can fit it perfectly into an overall arrangement of knowledge in which God has revealed all that is needed for salvation—and all the propositions that are needed for knowledge. As salvation is complete, so is the sum of human knowing.[25] In this view, theological knowledge both wraps up all other disciplines and becomes *the* meta-discipline: it knows the limits and possibilities of knowing.

4 The Sacerdotal Dimension of the Christian Teacher's Work

In all his work of compiling, summarising, and packaging, Isidore never expresses a doubt that the Christian understanding of creation, his theology, can

22 On the use of these works of Isidore as basic guides to the scriptures, Thomas O'Loughlin, "Seeking the medieval view of the Song of Songs," *Proceedings of the Irish Biblical Association* 18 (1995), 94–116.

23 Isidore, *Expositio in Vetus Testamentum: Genesis* 5–6, l. 100–24.

24 See Jamie Wood, "*Brevitas* in the historical writings of Isidore of Seville," in *Early Medieval Spain – A Symposium*, eds. Alan Deyermond and Martin J. Ryan (London: 2010), 37–53.

25 This aspect of Isidore's activity as an encyclopaedist was noted long ago in Ernest Brehaut's *An Encyclopedist of the Dark Ages: Isidore of Seville* (New York: 1912) but is often forgotten in the desire to note Isidore's sources on the one hand and his influence on the other.

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be adequately transmitted in textbooks, and this silence, in one who had available to him an extensive library, is itself a basic premise of his theology. This attitude supposes not only that there is a dominant intellectual paradigm—to use the language of Thomas Kuhn[26]—where it is only details that need to be resolved, but that most if not all the problems have been resolved. Knowledge is not only coherent within their religious system, but also virtually complete. This perspective sets Isidore apart from his great sources: Augustine, for example, knew that there were competing visions of the creation and human history, as we see in his *De civitate Dei*, and that the solutions of today will be inadequate for tomorrow, as we see in his returning to subjects over his lifetime until his final *Retractationes*. Isidore had no such need: at best one could convey the material in a more fluent form, but for the most part where we do find him addressing an issue on several occasions, what we find are repetitions. When this sense of satisfaction with the paradigm is combined with his respect for the truth as given by the *auctoritates*, located within a view of Christian writing that amounts to a sense of the corporate personality of the Christian schoolmaster,[27] it seemed an obvious conclusion that the work of theology was complete. This notion would become a commonplace in later Latin theology when it was expressed in such formulae as "scripture is all sufficient" or "revelation ended with the death of the last apostle"—and it would be only in the 19th century that its inadequacy as a position would be tentatively broached within Christian theology—but Isidore is probably the first Latin writer who took it as axiomatic. So, would there be need for more Christian writers? Isidore would have to answer positively: there would be new confusions due to human weakness and sin, there would be the survival of false opinions, and, presumably, there might be even more concise textbooks.

However, there was a deeper and darker reason why theologians would be needed: Christian teaching—even in those matters we would imagine as "secular"—did not operate in a neutral space where there were simply teachers and pupils. Just as the divine Spirit brought illumination to the darkness of the human mind, so were there evil spiritual forces constantly working against true doctrine. Wandering in the lower atmosphere were the demons, condemned to be there until the Day of Judgement, and they are ruled by the Devil/Satan.[28] Their constant activity is to counter the virtues in human beings that lead to holiness. Therefore, humans in their pursuit of the truth are

26 Thomas S. Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, 3rd ed. (Chicago: 1996).

27 O'Loughlin, *Teachers and Code-Breakers*, 42–71.

28 *Etymologiae* 8.11.17. On some of the sources of this section of the *Etymologiae*—and a brief introduction to his demonology, see Katherine Nell Macfarlane, "Isidore of Seville on the Pagan Gods (*Origines* VIII.11)," *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society* 70 (1980), 1–40.

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engaged in a warfare with them—for Isidore takes for granted that they are children of "the Liar," the "enemy of truth" (*veritatis inimicus*).[29] Human confusions and false opinions can be attributed to this demonic source, and it is part of the work of the Christian priest to lead the faithful in this battle.[30] Moreover, since Satan is the Antichrist, he makes opposing the mysteries of the Christ (*sacramenta Christi*), which it is the teachers' task to expound, his special concern. It is he, the Antichrist, that denies the divinity of the Christ,[31] and so Isidore assumes his readers will realise that it is this Evil One who is behind all the various christological heresies. In the *De viris illustribus* this had been one of the themes that characterised the eminent teachers; and we now see that this was not simply a tribute to their adherence to an orthodoxy but a demonstration that bishops/theologians were involved intimately in the drama of salvation. The theologian as the Christian of intellectual prowess is a notion that Isidore can barely imagine, but he has a clear view of the sacerdotal role of the theologian in opposing the attacks of the Devil, and this elevates the status of the teacher into the very structure not only of the Church but of creation.[32] Viewed in this light, the teacher's role with regard to knowledge and teaching is very close to that of the bishop, and this needs to be borne in mind when we distinguish between "secular" and "sacred" in Isidore's *oeuvre*: whether looking at pagan learning or biblical books, whether dealing with material objects or mysteries, the theologically alert teacher would be needed to ensure that the truth was enunciated, but also, perhaps more crucially, to fend off the attacks of The Tempter on the innocent.[33]

5 Isidore and the Framework of Western Theology

Even a cursory reading of Isidore shows him to be a redactor of authorities: item after item, from this source and that, placed in sequence and justified, as he sometimes remarked, by his appeal "to the writings of the men of old and especially the catholic writers."[34] Isidore's own desire not to be seen as an

29 *Etymologiae* 8.11.19. Behind this stands his reading of such texts as John 8:44, 2 Cor. 2:11 and Rev. 12:9.

30 This can be seen in the stress on the holiness of the bishop-teachers in his *De viris illustribus*.

31 *Etymologiae* 8.11.20–22: this text is, in effect, several paraphrases of 1 John 2:22.

32 Moreover, it comes full circle with his views of the sacerdotality of Christian ministry, based explicitly on the Aaronic priesthood but its perfect fulfilment, that Isidore expounds throughout the second book of the *De ecclesiasticis officiis*.

33 *Etymologiae* 8.11.19.

34 *De natura rerum*, praefatio.

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innovator matches our modern description of him as lacking in originality. Isidore's *own* writing is then presented with images such as the mortar between the bricks:[35] he may the formal source of some later medieval writer's position, but for the genuine source of an idea we have to look behind him. This is certainly true if one conceives the history of ideas as tracking some notion back to its earliest expression, but it runs the danger of not recognising that knowledge, particularly religious knowledge where shared story is central, always exists within a social construction and is in continual evolution. So, the question should be framed: how important is Isidore's theological input if, instead of imagining his own work as "mortar," we think of it as the steel skeleton of the edifice of Christian knowledge? This, the structure of the Christian intellectual world, was an issue that Isidore addressed in several of his writings, and his solutions were adopted, with little alteration if often with some confusion, by his successors.[36]

The teacher, knowing that truth had to be attained and falsehood avoided, was faced with a mass of material, all of which was conveyed in language: if this could be arranged in order, then the pupil could progress. Isidore sets out a scheme for this when he addresses the difference between wisdom (*sapientia*) and knowledge (*scientia*).[37] What he produces is a structure that can locate all that is known both about the creation and the Creator within a single pathway with wisdom as its destination, which he defines as "the contemplation of eternal realities", for a life lived "before the eyes of God". It can be arranged in tabular form thus:

	Physics—	Seven Arts			
W					
I		Justice	Divine Truth		
S	Ethics—	Prudence			Historical sense
D		Fortitude	Scripture		"Middle" sense
O		Temperance			Spiritual sense
M					
	Logic—	Dialectic &c			

35 Various images have been used, but this image of mortar is that employed by Macfarlane, "Isidore of Seville on the Pagan Gods," 4: "[Isidore] contributes little more than the mortar which connects excerpts from other authors."

36 One can still see its influence in such work as the *De reductione atrium ad theologiam* by Bonaventure (*c*.1217–1274).

37 Isidore, *De differentiis verborum* 2.39.148–158.

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While each element in this structure is inherited, the simplicity with which they are brought together and aligned with each other is Isidore's; and, moreover, it expresses the core of his theology of creation. Just as the whole of the creation forms a unity in its dependence on God, so is that unity reflected in the human pursuit of wisdom. While humans could be content with a mere assemblage of facts (*scientia*), the intended end of knowing is the wholeness of the creation and its relationship to God. Implicit in this is the assumption that wisdom and truth cannot be separated, and that the truth is itself a unity—no true expression can contradict any other expression—and that unity is inherent within human knowing and not simply as a result of a true knowledge of God. By linking the structures of creation and knowing in this way he pioneered not only the scholastic method with its reliance on the transcendental unity of truth, but also a very positive view of the creation as we find it (indeed a theology of creation's goodness which, if fully spelled out, might have held as suspect).

That Isidore's position on the creation/human knowing in the *De differentiis verborum* was not just the passing thought of a moment but his considered position can be seen in the overall structure we find in the *Etymologiae*,[38] and also in the way he, firstly, links various human disciplines with the structures of revelation found in the scriptures in that work, and then, secondly, links the ways of knowing with the ends of human life. He links human wisdom (and so its study) with the scriptures (and so exegesis) in *Etymologiae* 2.24.3–8 thus:

Natural	Physics	Thales	The Material Causes	Genesis & Qoheleth
Moral	Ethics	Socrates	Human life	Proverbs, &c
Rational	Logic	Plato	The Higher Causes	The Song of Songs & the gospels

Isidore then considers how the values of knowing as valued within Christian learning—as that was conceived of within a monastic context in the aftermath of John Cassian—could be reconciled with the values of knowing found in human philosophy (*Etymologiae* 2.24.10–16). The relationship can be set out thusly:

38 The actual division into books and chapters is somewhat arbitrary and the work of Braulio of Zaragoza; the more valuable division is that into subject areas, which is Isidore's own work.

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Inspective Concerns invisible things, divine matters, and heavenly contemplation.	Natural[a]	The creation as it was intended by God.[b]
	Doctrinal	The quadrivium founded in the abstraction of number.[c]
	Divine	Concerns the ineffable nature of God; and matters relating to the spiritual creatures.[d]
Actual Presumably the opposite of the above: visible, material, and terrestrial things.	Moral[e]	Honest living and the virtues.[f]
	Domestic	The correct order of living in a household.[g]
	Civil	Life in the city.[h]

a This division is made at *Etymologiae* 2.24.10. It might be objected that this tabulation of Isidore's work is itself an interpretation of him, which it is, but that Isidore had an overarching view of these matters is confirmed by the fact that the whole is internally consistent and he never contradicts himself.
b *Etymologiae* 2.24.12.
c *Etymologiae* 2.24.10 and 14–15.
d *Etymologiae* 2.24.13.
e *Etymologiae* 2.24.11.
f *Etymologiae* 2.24.16.
g *Etymologiae* 2.24.16.
h *Etymologiae* 2.24.16.

While in all these cases it is possible to dismiss Isidore's work as no more than that of creating a neat taxonomy—and it is neat and was appreciated as such by his successors—or that of creating a synthesis of words and appearances rather than seeking a fundamental theoretical reconciliation between Christian faith and human knowing, that would not only be unjust to Isidore's creativity within his understanding of how a Christian teacher should act, but it fails to recognise the inherent fecundity of this synthesis in terms of the Latin tradition. The scholar could draw in all human knowing into his theology, while seeing in the whole of creation and its history an apologetic and demonstration of Christian truth.

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6 Conclusion: Isidore's Legacy

Given his literary productivity it is possible to ascertain, usually with a high degree of precision, Isidore's position on most theological topics that were under discussion in the Patristic period. There have been numerous studies of particular issues where he is usually studied as a moment in the movement from Augustine to the scholastics.[39] Usually these appear as a consensus of earlier disputes, and often they can be seen as the intermediate position between that found in an earlier and a later writer of note. However, by Isidore's reduction of inherently complex debates to simple categorical statements he often produced an extreme form which did a serious disservice to his sources. His Christology, for example, is so fascinated with the divinity of Christ that he presents the humanity of Jesus docetically,[40] while his doctrine of the Eucharist is so concerned with the notion of presence that it loses sight of the inherent ambiguity of the notion of a sacrament/mystery.[41]

Isidore always presents his material as settled knowledge, and he was taken at his word in that his works are usually the key to how a Patristic theme was modified to become a standard element in Western theology.[42] Equally, the extent of Isidore's impact can be ascertained by looking at the diffusion of his works, which we can measure by citations, references to him or his works, and the raw quantities of surviving manuscripts. But while these investigations are useful in understanding the development of Western thought, they should not deflect us from noting that it is Isidore's underlying assumptions about the nature of theology, expressed in text after text and reproduced in manuscript

39 There are a few topics where his position has become an almost mandatory footnote. The most famous case is his interpretation of predestination where he was the first to use the later famous, or infamous, term of "double predestination" (Isidore, *Sententiae* 2.6.1); see Jaroslav Pelikan, *The Growth of Medieval Theology* (*600–1300*) (Chicago: 1978), 88–89.

40 See Thomas O'Loughlin, "Christ as the Focus of Genesis Exegesis in Isidore of Seville," in *Studies in Patristic Theology*, eds. T. Finan and V. Twomey (Dublin: 1998), 142–62.

41 See, for want of more recent studies: Josef Rupert Geiselmann, *Die Abendmahlslehre an der Wende de christlichen Spätantike zum Frühmittelalter Isidor von Sevilla und des Sakrament der Eucharistie* (Munich: 1933), and J. Havet, "Les Sacraments et le rôle de l'Esprit Saint d'après Isidore de Seville," *Ephemerides Theologicae Lovanienses* 16 (1939), 32–93.

42 For an example of this, note the role of Isidore in generating the Western notion of the problems of reading biblical apocrypha; see Thomas O'Loughlin, "Inventing the Apocrypha: The Role of Early Latin Canon Lists," *Irish Theological Quarterly* 74 (2009), 53–74.

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after manuscript, which are his major and most enduring legacy. Isidore described a world that lay wholly covered by a sacred mantle, and as such it is an enchanted universe. But it is also a rational space in that revelation could be known with clarity and expressed as propositions—his own actual lack of clarity notwithstanding—while contradictory evidence could be marginalised as curiosities surviving from the past or details just needing diligence to bring them to a coherent resolution. Theology—and revelation itself—was a matter of proposition calling for assent. In this ordered creation humans had about them the handiwork of the Creator and, if pious and attentive, could discover all its secrets and that "all wisdom is from the Lord" (Sir. 1:1). There was no need for any new information; indeed, there was no new information to be found, and the challenge that faced Isidore and his successors was to present and transmit it effectively. In relation to theological questions his pupils could be complacent—the answers were there—but at the same time they could not be complacent as Christians, for the Devil and his fallen angels were setting traps for them to lead them astray. The ideal theologian was a Christian *sacerdos* with a prodigious and organised memory: someone not unlike Isidore himself.

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CHAPTER 6

Isidore of Seville as an Historian

Jamie Wood

1 Introduction

The fact that Isidore and his contemporaries in Visigothic Spain did not compose histories of significant length and detail has led many scholars to judge 6th- and 7th-century Spain as something of an historiographical wasteland.[1] For example, E.A. Thompson stated that Isidore: "could hardly have told us less, except by not writing at all".[2] Walter Goffart described Isidore as "almost distinguished enough" as an historian to be included in his quartet of "narrators of barbarian history".[3] Despite these less-than-positive appraisals of Visigothic-era historiography, the past was fundamental to how the people of Visigothic Spain understood their position in the world.[4] Aside from works of history-writing and hagiography, many of the documentary sources of the period, from the records of church councils to the efforts of kings to make and codify royal laws, were essentially backward-looking and involved the collation and reconfiguration of the knowledge of past times.[5] Knowledge of the past had to be deployed so that it could be made useful in the present and future.

This chapter seeks to move beyond the negative appraisals of Isidore as an historian by taking account of the full scope of his "historical" output. Scholars

1 Parts of this chapter revisit and develop points made in Jamie Wood, *The Politics of Identity in Visigothic Spain: Religion and Power in the Histories of Isidore of Seville* (Leiden: 2012).

2 E.A. Thompson, *The Goths in Spain* (Oxford: 1969), 7. For more on this tendency, see Roger Collins, "Julian of Toledo and the Royal Succession in Late Seventh-Century Spain," in *Early Medieval Kingship*, eds. P.H. Sawyer and I.N. Wood (Leeds: 1977), 32.

3 Walter Goffart, *The Narrators of Barbarian History* (*A.D. 550–800*)*: Jordanes, Gregory of Tours, Bede, and Paul the Deacon* (Princeton: 1988), 11.

4 Marc Reydellet, *La royauté dans la littérature latine de Sidoine Apollinaire à Isidore de Séville* (Rome: 1981); Suzanne Teillet, *Des Goths à la nation Gothique. Les origines de l'idée de nation en Occident du Ve au VIIe siècle* (Paris: 1984); A.H. Merrills, *History and Geography in Late Antiquity* (Cambridge: 2005); Manuel Koch, *Ethnische Identität im Entstehungsprozess des spanischen Westgotenreiches* (Berlin: 2012); Shami Ghosh, *Writing the Barbarian Past: Studies in Early Medieval Historical Narrative* (Leiden: 2015).

5 See the following recent study for more on this: Michael J. Kelly, *Writing History, Narrating Fulfillment: the "Isidore-Moment" and the Struggle for the "Before Now" in Late Antique and Early Medieval Hispania* (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Leeds, 2014).

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have long recognised that Isidore had a well-developed philosophy of history and that he aimed to elicit specific social responses when writing, especially in some of his more pastorally and theologically inclined works.[6] What is more, the fact that he rewrote his accounts of the past on multiple occasions has provided fertile ground for analysis of his practice as an author, including his use of sources, and the impact of changing religious and political contexts on his writing of history.[7] He wrote biographies that recounted (usually briefly) the lives, deeds, and writings of men—and a few women—who had played an important role in the recent and not-so-recent history of Christianity. He was also an enthusiastic recorder of etymologies, writings which charted the origins and histories of words. On many occasions the etymologies that Isidore offers also touch on important historical events and figures. The most clearly "historical" of Isidore's writings, however, were his narrative histories and chronicles.

In what follows, I begin by outlining Isidore's definition of history as a genre, focussing on his exposition of the origins and boundaries of the genre.[8] I then move on to review the full range of Isidore's historical output, from chronicles and histories to biographies and other writings that were organised historically, suggesting that such works, although written across a period of three decades and for a variety of purposes, were interlinked and thus can be considered as part of a coherent historiographical "project." The final section addresses the underpinning rationale for historical writing, which can be traced to Isidore's definition of history as a genre that served a moral purpose for the instruction of the present.

2 Isidore on History as a Genre

At the end of book 1 of his *Etymologiae*, "De grammatica," which provides definitions and derivations of the elements of grammar and speech, Isidore addresses the subject of history. After a definition of "historia," he moves on to discuss, in turn, the first authors of history, the usefulness of history, and the

6 Hans-Joachim Diesner, *Isidor von Sevilla und seine Zeit* (Stuttgart: 1973), 40–49; Paul Merritt Bassett, "The Use of History in the Chronicon of Isidore of Seville," *History and Theory* 15 (1976), 279.

7 Wood, *The Politics of Identity*, 65–241; Isabel Velázquez, "Revisiones de autor y de copistas en las obras de Isidoro de Sevilla," *Antiquité Tardive* 23 (2015), 67–79.

8 For the issue of genre when discussing medieval historiography, see Deborah Mauskopf Deliyannis, "Introduction," in *Historiography in the Middle Ages*, ed. Deborah Mauskopf Deliyannis (Leiden: 2003), 1–7.

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different kinds of history. While it can be problematic to contrast uncritically Isidore's theoretical writings about history with his historiographical output, the *Etymologiae* provides a clear definition of "history," an outline of origins of the literary genre and details of its internal and external boundaries. This can help us to better comprehend how such insights found expression in his writings.

In the first book of the *Etymologiae* Isidore defines history as a written project on a large scale.[9] In book 6, in the midst of a discussion about the names of different-sized books, he notes that "Histories were written in a larger size book".[10] Isidore was acutely aware of the different forms of historical writing and makes clear his awareness of the subdivisions within the genre:

> There are three kinds of history. The events of a single day are called an "ephemeris;" we call this a "diary." What the Romans call "daily," the Greeks call *ephemeris*. Histories that are distributed into individual months are called "calendars." Annals are the actions of individual years, for whatever domestic or military matters, on sea or land, worthy of memory are treated year by year in records they called "annals" from yearly deeds. But history concerns itself with many years or ages, and through the diligence of history annual records are reported in books. There is this difference between history and annals, namely, that history is of those times that we have seen, but annals are of those years that our age has not known. Whence Sallust consists of history, and Livy, Eusebius, and Jerome of annals and history.[11]

9 Isidore, *Etymologiae* 1.41–44. See Also: Isidore, *Etymologiae* 1.38–41. Presenting information according to an ascending or a descending scale was common Isidorian practice, as is demonstrated in more detail by Faith Wallis in her chapter in this volume.

10 Isidore, *Etymologiae* 1.5.4; 6.12.1; H. de Carlos Villamarín, "Dares Frigio y el concepto de la historia en Isidoro de Sevilla," in *Poétique de la chronique. L'écriture des textes historiographiques au Moyen Âge* (*péninsule Ibérique et France*), ed. A. Arizaleta (Toulouse: 2005), 11–25.

11 "Genus historiae triplex est. Ephemeris namque appellatur unius diei gestio. Hoc apud nos diarium vocatur. Nam quod Latini diurnum, Graeci ephemerida dicunt. Kalendaria appellantur, quae in menses singulos digeruntur. Annales sunt res singulorum annorum. Quaequae enim digna memoriae domi militiaeque, mari ac terrae per annos in commentariis acta sunt, ab anniversariis gestis annales nominaverunt. Historia autem multorum annorum vel temporum est, cuius diligentia annui commentarii in libris delati sunt. Inter historiam autem et annales hoc interest, quod historia est eorum temporum quae vidimus, annales vero sunt eorum annorum quos aetas nostra non novit. Unde Sallustius ex historia, Livius, Eusebius et Hieronymus ex annalibus et historia constant," Isidore, *Etymologiae* 1.44, trans. Stephen A. Barney, W.J. Lewis, J.A. Beach, and Oliver Berghof, *The* Etymologies *of Isidore of Seville* (Cambridge: 2006), 67.

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In the fifth book of the *Etymologiae* Isidore states that Eusebius compiled a "Chronicle," a Greek word for "succession [*series*] of times" in Greek, and that Jerome translated it into Latin.[12] Elsewhere, he notes a division between the historical accounts that were contained in scripture, histories of the church, and secular histories.[13] He also categorises history (*historia*) as "narrative," one of three elements of the Old and New Testaments, alongside "moral instruction" (*mores*) and "allegorical meaning" (*allegoria*).[14]

As with the references to Livy, Eusebius and Jerome above, and in common with the approach that underpins the *Etymologiae* as a whole, there is also a consistent emphasis on the origins of the genre.

> Among us Christians Moses was the first to write a history, on creation. But among the pagans, Dares the Phrygian was first to publish a history, on the Greeks and Trojans, which they say he wrote on palm leaves. After Dares, Herodotus is held as the first to write history in Greece. After him Pherecydes was renowned, at the time when Ezra wrote the law.[15]

At first sight, there does not seem to be much order to this list of Greek, Roman, Jewish, and Christian historians and annalists.[16] As he does throughout the *Etymologiae*, Isidore notes that different peoples have varying vocabulary for the subject under review, in this case the forms of historical writing. They also have different "national" historians. Isidore's attempt to claim Moses as a Christian perhaps echoes the ancient debate between the Jews and the pagan Greeks over the relative antiquity of Moses and Homer, thereby reaffirming Jewish and, by extension, Christian, primacy.[17]

Isidore also distinguishes between the forms and subject matter of historical genres. History is primarily narrative in form, one of its main distinguishing

12 Isidore, *Etymologiae* 5.28, trans. Barney et al., 125.

13 Isidore, *Etymologiae* 15.1.2, 6.2.48, 7.9.19.

14 Isidore, *Etymologiae* 6.1.11, trans. Barney et al., 135; see also Isidore, *Sententiae* 1.18.11.

15 "Historiam autem apud nos primus Moyses de initio mundi conscripsit. Apud gentiles vero primus Dares Phrygius de Graecis et Troianis historiam edidit, quam in foliis palmarum ab eo conscriptam esse ferunt. Post Daretem autem in Graecia Herodotus historiam primus habitus est. Post quem Pherecydes claruit his temporibus quibus Esdras legem scripsit," Isidore, *Etymologiae* 1.42, trans. Barney et al., 67.

16 Isidore was clearly concerned with defining the categories to which different authors belonged, making it clear that Lucan wrote history and not poetry, *Etymologiae* 8.7.10.

17 At *Etymologiae* 6.2.1 Isidore again mentions Moses as a historian; de Carlos Villamarín, "Dares Frigio." Isidore's *De ortu et obitu patrum*, 60, 81 reinforced this point by referring to Esdras and Luke the evangelist as historians.

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features being the units of time on which the narrative is based.[18] The subject matter of history is times that the narrator has seen, whereas annals describe times which the current age does not know:

> And history, "plausible narration" and fable differ from one other. Histories are true deeds that have happened, plausible narrations are things that, even if they have not happened, nevertheless could happen, and fables are things that have not happened and cannot happen, because they are contrary to nature.[19]

The positioning of the chapter on "fable" (*De fabula*) immediately before the definition of history shows that the issue of veracity was important for Isidore: history should be truthful and plausible.[20] As we shall see later, this was due to the moral underpinning of the genre and the role that it was envisaged as playing in the instruction of the faithful; it also had to be useful.[21]

3 Isidore's Histories

3.1 *Chronicles*

In the past, Isidore's chronographic writings were denigrated as deficient versions of the past due to their relative lack of narrative detail and reliance on a limited number of sources.[22] In 2003 a new critical edition of the text established that there were two redactions of the *Chronica Maiora*, the longest version of the text: the first, written under King Sisebut in 615/616, and the second, completed under King Suinthila in 626. Isidore's *Chronica Minora* probably reached its final state in 626 and was officially published in 627/628 as part of

18 Deliyannis, "Introduction," 3–6.

19 "Item inter historiam et argumentum et fabulam interesse. Nam historiae sunt res verae quae factae sunt; argumenta sunt quae etsi facta non sunt, fieri tamen possunt; fabulae vero sunt quae nec factae sunt nec fieri possunt, quia contra naturam sunt," Isidore, *Etymologiae* 1.44, trans. Barney et al., 67.

20 Isidore, *Etymologiae* 1.40.

21 See the chapter by Pedro Castillo Maldonado in this volume.

22 For example, Roger Collins, "Isidore, Maximus, and the *Historia Gothorum*," in *Historiographie im frühen Mittelalter*, eds. Anton Scharer and Georg Scheibelreiter (Vienna: 1994), 354, describes the *Chronicle* as a "scissors and paste" composition derived largely from second-hand material and offering a deficient account of world history.

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the fifth book of the *Etymologiae*.[23] Scholars began to unpick the complex relationships between the different versions of the *Chronica*, its sources, and Isidore's other writings. In the process, they have challenged previous negative judgements of the work.[24]

The *Chronica Minora* (Chapter 39 of book 5 of the *Etymologiae*) used to be viewed as little more than an epitome of the *Chronica Maiora*. While there is significant interdependence between the two texts, there are also differences. Some the manuscripts of the *Chronica Minora* can be characterised as "archetypes" between the first and second redactions of the *Chronica Maiora*, representing stages of epitomisation. The *Chronica Minora* therefore contains epitomised entries from both redactions of the longer text, alongside some information that is found in neither version of the *Chronica Maiora*. In addition, the *Chronica Minora* has an independent manuscript tradition compared to the *Chronica Maiora* and the *Etymologiae*, while at least one manuscript of the *Etymologiae* (Cesena, Biblioteca Comunale Malatestiana, S.XX1.5, late 8th/early 9th century, northern Italy) includes the *Chronica Maiora* rather than the *Chronica Minora*.[25] The *Chronica Minora* can therefore be seen as an independent work and not solely as a degraded version of the *Chronica Maiora*.[26]

Isidore made active use of late antique historical and chronographic sources to produce the chronicles.[27] There is a preference for Christian historians and chroniclers, with the Latin translation and continuation of Eusebius of Caesarea's *Chronicon* by Jerome (and his continuators; Victor of Tunnuna and John of Biclarum were notable sources from the mid-to-late sixth century) a favoured source. Isidore also used non-Christian histories. The abbreviated histories of Rome put together by Eutropius and others in the late 4th century

23 For dates, see José Carlos Martín, ed., *Isidori Hispalensis Chronica*, CCSL 112 (Turnhout: 2003), 119–23, and José Carlos Martín, "El capítulo 39 del libro V de las *Etimologías* y la *Crónica* de Isidoro de Sevilla a la luz de la tradición manuscrita de esta última obra," in *Actas. III Congreso Hispánico de Latín Medieval* (*León, 26–29 de Septiembre de 2001*), ed. Mauricio Pérez González, 2 vols (León: 2002), 1:161–70. Jacques Elfassi's chapter in this volume deals further with this issue.

24 For summary, see Jamie Wood, "*Religiones* and *gentes* in Isidore of Seville's *Chronica Maiora*: The Visigoths as a chosen people," in *Post-Roman Transitions: Christian and Barbarian Identities in the Early Medieval West*, eds. Walter Pohl and Gerda Heydemann (Turnhout: 2013), 125–68.

25 Martín, "El capítulo 39," 162–67.

26 For further discussion and references, see Wood, *Politics of Identity*, 70–72.

27 Jerome Patrick Mullins, *The Spiritual Life According to Saint Isidore of Seville* (Washington, DC: 1940), 42–78. D.J. Uitvlugt, "The sources of Isidore's commentaries on the Pentateuch," *Revue Bénédictine* 112 (2002), 72–73 and 93–94, makes a similar point about Isidore's use of sources in his commentaries on the Pentateuch.

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were used with relative frequency. Often these sources were severely edited and combined with other historical and non-historical sources, such as Augustine's *Civitas Dei*, which provides one of the organising elements of the second redaction of Isidore's *Chronica*: the six ages of the world schema.[28] In places sources are summarised and augmented with Isidore's own authorial input, especially as he neared his own day.

Because nearly all of the sources used to compile the chronicles are extant it is possible to compare the historical information that Isidore had at his disposal (a huge amount) and what he chose to write down (a very small amount). In so doing, we can witness an early medieval historian making conscious decisions about his representation of the past. The exclusions are strikingly congruent with Isidore's explicit statements on particular topics elsewhere in his corpus. For example, positive references in earlier sources to the Roman emperors are often excluded, as is much of the negative information about the Visigoths. The material that Isidore excluded from his histories can thus tell us much about the imperatives that drove him to write (and rewrite) his accounts of the past.[29]

3.2 *Narrative Histories*

Isidore is unique among the historians of the early Middle Ages because he wrote narrative histories of three separate "barbarian" groups: the Visigoths, the Vandals, and the Sueves. In the process he constructed a work of "considerable originality" that "deserves more attention than it has received."[30] The text commonly known as the *Historia Gothorum* (*History of the Goths*) was not known as such initially. In a list of Isidore's writings produced shortly after Isidore's death, Braulio of Zaragoza described the text as "A single book on the origin of the Goths (*de origine Gothorum*) and the kingdom of the Sueves and the Vandals".[31] Given Isidore's interest in etymologies and origins in other works, it is not unlikely that *De origine Gothorum*, or similar, was the original title of the text.

Isidore wrote two versions of his *Historia Gothorum*. It is generally accepted that the longer redaction of the *Historia Gothorum* is an expanded version of

28 Peter Darby, *Bede and the End of Time* (Farnham: 2012), 30.

29 Wood, *The Politics of Identity*, 19.

30 Joaquín Martínez Pizarro, "Ethnic and National History, ca. 500–1000," in Deliyannis, *Historiography*, 58.

31 Braulio of Zaragoza, *Renotatio librorum domini Isidori*, l. 39–41, trans. Claude W. Barlow, *Iberian Fathers, Volume 2: Braulio of Saragossa, Fructuousus of Braga* (Washington, DC: 1969), 141.

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the shorter.[32] Although there has been some speculation that the first redaction of the text may have been the work of another historian writing in the 610s, this has not been widely accepted.[33] Elsewhere I have suggested that the first redaction of the *Historia Gothorum* aligns with Isidore's other writings and that, even if Isidore did not write the text, it certainly emerged from a cultural milieu very similar to that in which he operated.[34] In any case, the second redaction of the *Historia Gothorum* represents a significant development of the first. The shorter redaction ends with the death of Sisebut in 621 and the longer in the middle of Suinthila's reign in 625.[35] The publication of the different versions of the *Historia Gothorum* thus mirrors that of the *Chronica Maiora*, occurring under Sisebut and Suinthila, respectively, and celebrating their various achievements, especially victories against the Byzantines.[36]

Although the *Historia Gothorum* has traditionally been considered a work of narrative history, its genre "has never been satisfactorily defined".[37] There are organisational similarities to the chronicles: for example, the chronological framework derives from reigns of individual Visigothic kings, just as the versions of Isidore's *Chronica* were ordered by the reigns of Roman and earlier emperors. The *Historia Gothorum* offers a fairly sparse narrative of Visigothic history, and Isidore makes few comments on the events that he records. Again, this resembles the *Chronica*, where narrative description and explicit authorial intervention are largely absent. We should still see the *Historia Gothorum*, especially in its second redaction, which included significant additions of a

32 Cristóbal Rodríguez Alonso, ed., *Las historias de los godos, vándalos y suevos de Isidoro de Sevilla* (León: 1975), 26–49.

33 Collins, "Isidore, Maximus," for non-Isidorian authorship; Michael Kulikowski, *Late Roman Spain and Its Cities* (Baltimore: 2004), 403–06, n. 81, who tends to the opinion that Isidore did not write the first redaction, noting, however, that such a proposition is "unprovable" (at 405); Luis A. García Moreno, "¿Por qué Isidoro de Sévilla quizo escribir una segunda version de su *Historia Gothorum*?" in *Famille, violence et christianisation au Moyen Âge. Mélanges oferts à Michel Rouche*, eds. Martin Aurell and Thomas Deswarte (Paris: 2005), 387–408, is in favour of Isidorian authorship.

34 Wood, *The Politics of Identity*, 72–73.

35 There are more surviving MSS of the long redaction of the *Historia Gothorum* than the short redaction, José Carlos Martín, "Réflexions sur la tradition manuscrite de trois œuvres d'Isidore de Séville: le *De natura rerum*, la *Regula monachorum* et le *De origine Getarum, Vandalorum, Sueborum*," *Filologia Mediolatina* 11 (2004), 205–63.

36 The scholarly consensus is that King Sisebut inspired Isidore's historical writings, Manuel C. Díaz y Díaz, "Isidoro en la Edad Media hispana," *Isidoriana* (León: 1960), 346–47; Marc Reydellet, "Les intentions idéologiques dans la "Chronique" d'Isidore de Séville," *Mélanges d'archéologie et d'histoire* 82 (1970), 390; Jocelyn N. Hillgarth, "Historiography in Visigothic Spain," *Settimane di Studio* 17 (1970), 288.

37 Martínez Pizarro, "Ethnic and National History," 59.

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panegyric and encomiastic nature, as a form of narrative history, but one that was influenced by chronographical conventions and Isidore's belief that good history should be presented briefly.

3.3 *Biographies*

At some point between 598 and 615 Isidore composed the *De ortu et obitu patrum*, a biographical catalogue of the lives of various biblical figures. He based the work on scriptural material combined with Patristic commentaries and a limited number of histories and chronicles, and situated his biblical fathers in universal historical time by noting the imperial reigns during which some of the apostles and evangelists lived.[38] The text was designed as a sort of general biographical introduction to the main figures of biblical history, as the preface reveals, in which Isidore states that "The birth, deeds and genealogies of certain holy and most noble men have been introduced", briefly alongside their "rank, death and burial" in a "small book." He goes on to state that anyone could have found this information by skimming through the "fullness of the Scriptures" but that it returns "more easily to memory" through a brief exposition.[39] The *De ortu et obitu patrum* was thus designed to provide an easy-to-use and accessible resource for those who wanted to engaging in scriptural study.

Isidore's *De viris illustribus* is a list of thirty-three famous Christians who mostly lived in the 5th, 6th, and 7th centuries. The work may have been intended to celebrate the lives of Leander of Seville and Gregory the Great, who were closely connected in the text and both of whom had probably died in the years immediately before the text was written.[40] Although scholars used to date its composition to 615–18, the *De viris illustribus* has been redated to sometime between 604 and 608.[41] Whatever date we accept, the text forms a neat pair with *De ortu et obitu patrum*, providing a list of recent Christian celebrities to complement the catalogue of ancient biblical figures.

38 Isidore, *De ortu et obitu patrum* 67.4–5 (Simon Peter), 68.5 (Paul), 71.4 (John the Evangelist), 79 (Simon Zelotes).

39 "Quorundam sanctorum nobilissimorumque uirorum ortus uel gesta cum genealogiis suit in hoc libello indita sunt; dignitas quoque et mors eorum atque sepultura sententiali breuitate notata. Quae, quamvis omnibus nota sint qui per amplitudinem Scripturarum percurrunt, facilius tamen ad memoriam redeunt, dum breui sermone leguntur," Isidore, *De ortu et obitu patrum*, praefatio.

40 Jamie Wood, "Playing the Fame Game: Bibliography, Celebrity and Primacy in Late Antique Spain," *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 20 (2012), 613–40.

41 José Carlos Martín, "Une nouvelle édition critique de la *Vita Desiderii* de Sisebut, accompagnée de quelques réflexions concernant la date des *Sententiae* et du *De uiris illustribus* d'Isidore de Séville," *Hagiographica* 7 (2000), 141–44.

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Isidore was concerned with establishing the historical excellence of the Spanish church through reference to the illustrious ecclesiastics of its past. His *De viris illustribus* therefore continued the catalogues of famous Christians that had been initiated by Jerome (347/348–419/420) in the late 4th century and extended by Gennadius of Marseilles (d. 496) at the end of the 5th.[42] However, because there had not been very many Spanish churchmen in the works of his predecessors, Isidore created a list that included a host of orthodox and literary Spanish bishops. In addition, if, as seems likely, the three different *De viris illustribus* texts circulated together, then *De ortu et obitu patrum* can be read as preliminary to that collection. Isidore's *De viris illustribus* closed out the compilation, creating a full catalogue of illustrious Christians from biblical times up to the (increasingly Spanish) present.

4 The *Etymologiae* and Beyond

Isidore's *magnum opus*, the *Etymologiae*, was probably published in 627/628, although it was written over a period of perhaps a decade and preliminary versions may have been released earlier.[43] The text was a compendium of classical and Christian knowledge arranged according to the etymologies of words. It used to be seen as little more than an extended exercise in antiquarianism, but recent research has overturned this judgement. Isidore's efforts to epitomise and etymologise ancient knowledge are now seen as part of a determined attempt to connect with the past in order to put its legacy to work for positive ends in the present, namely to educate the clergy and evangelise the population of Spain.[44]

The *Etymologiae* are also important to our inquiries into Isidore's historical worldview because the text includes a vast amount of information about the past, including the *Chronica Minora*, and, as we saw above, a definition of

42 Richard H. Rouse and Mary A. Rouse, "Bibliography before Print: The Medieval *De viris illustribus*," in *The Role of the Book in Medieval Culture: Proceedings of the Oxford International Symposium, 26 September – 1 October 1982,* ed. Peter Ganz, 2 vols (Turnhout: 1986), 1:135, 139–40.

43 W. Porzig, "Die Rezensionen der *Etymologiae* des Isidorus von Sevilla," *Hermes* 72 (1937), 129–70; José M. Fernández Catón, *Las Etimologías en la tradición manuscrita medieval estudiada por el Prof. Dr. Anspach* (León: 1966). See the chapter by Jacques Elfassi in this volume for more on this topic.

44 Bernard Ribémont, *Les origines des encyclopédies medievales: D'Isidore de Séville aux Carolingiens* (Paris: 2001); John Henderson, *The Medieval World of Isidore of Seville: Truth from Words* (Cambridge: 2007).

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"history." Indeed, historical reasoning was central to the *Etymologiae* as a whole, and etymological thinking can be considered as a form of historical discourse.[45] Isidore stated that etymology "is the origin of words, when the power of a word or a name is gathered together through interpretation. […] For when you have seen whence a word has originated, you understand its force more quickly. Indeed, one's insight into anything is clearer when its etymology is known".[46] The *Etymologiae* thus sought out the (historical) origins of words in order to find out their true underlying meanings.

A large number of Isidore's other writings, even those that are not "historical" in form, design, or stated intent, were composed via a process that involved excerpting and editing earlier authors. In producing texts such as the *Sententiae*, Isidore essentially created "collages" of the works of those who had gone before him, focussing on particular topics of spiritual, pastoral, and grammatical importance. Equally significant was the role that Isidore played in the collation and editing of the records of church councils, including contemporary councils within Spain, as well as those from further afield and from the more distant past.[47] Isidore aimed, as many previous commentators have acknowledged, to collate the knowledge of earlier Christian and non-Christian writers in order to make it useful for his contemporaries. Whether or not the form or content of the resulting works was "historical," the process of composition can be considered as such.

5 An Historiographical Project

Although Isidore was acutely aware of the historiographical traditions in which he wrote, in practice there was overlap between narrative histories and chronicles.[48] It was not uncommon for chronicles to provide very full narrative accounts of near contemporary events and to include a great deal of comment by

45 For more on the *Etymologiae* and etymological thinking in Isidore more generally, see the chapter by Jacques Elfassi in this volume.

46 "Etymologia est origo vocabulorum, cum vis verbi vel nominis per interpretationem colligitur. […] Nam dum videris unde ortum est nomen, citius vim eius intellegis. Omnis enim rei inspectio etymologia cognita planior est," Isidore, *Etymologiae* 1.29.

47 Charles Munier, "Saint Isidore de Seville est-il l'auteur de l'Hispana chronologique?" *Sacris-Erudiri* 17 (1966), 230–41; Rachel L. Stocking, "Martianus, Aventius, and Isidore: Provincial Councils in Seventh-Century Spain," *Early Medieval Europe* 6 (1997), 169–88.

48 Jacques Fontaine, *Isidore de Séville: genèse et originalité de la culture hispanique au temps des Wisigoths* (Turnhout: 2000), 217–33, offers a survey of Isidore's histories and chronicles.

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the author. Often this was because chroniclers were implicated in the (recent) events that they were recounting. Conversely, some histories, including the *Historia Gothorum*, offered quite sparse accounts of history and incorporated minimal authorial comment, while histories and chronicles also often drew on each other as sources of information. Isidore's historical writings are no exception here; there was a significant degree of interpenetration between the various elements of his historiographical output, and this caused a blurring of the boundaries between what we have come to consider as separate genres: history, biography, and chronography (and etymology).

As was noted above, Isidore identified several different forms of historical writing in the *Etymologiae* (diaries, annals, histories) and focussed on defining the boundaries of the genre. Although he did not distinguish between annals and chronicles at the point at which he defined history in the *Etymologiae* (1.41–44), later in the text he discussed the vocabulary for chronicles (5.28). Presumably, the reason that he did not mention chronicles earlier was because there was a very close interrelationship between annals and chronicles.

> "Chronicle" is the Greek term for what is called a "succession (*series*) of times" in Latin. Among the Greeks Eusebius, Bishop of Caesarea, compiled such a work, and the priest Jerome translated it into Latin.[49]

In Isidore's conception, therefore, chronicles were a form of history because a chronicle was a *series* of times (the period remained undefined), a term that is defined in the section on history in the *Etymologiae*.[50] As was noted above, he describe and organised the *Historia Gothorum* in terms that fitted his definition of chronicles, as recording a succession of reigns (in this case of Visigothic kings). This would make additional sense if the *Historia Gothorum* was originally entitled *De origine Gothorum* (or similar) because chronicles and etymologies (the search for the origins of words) were closely related ways of thinking about and presenting the past. Annals were a subcategory of chronicles (and histories) because they only dealt with the yearly division and succession of history, while chronicles could cover history divided into any series of units of time (including yearly, annalistic accounts).[51]

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49 "Chronica Graece dicitur quae Latine temporum series appellatur, qualem apud Graecos Eusebius Caesariensis episcopus edidit, et Hieronymus presbyter in Latinam linguam convertit. Χρόνος enim Graece, Latine tempus interpretatur," Isidore, *Etymologiae* 5.28, trans. Barney et al., 125.

50 Isidore, *Etymologiae* 1.41. Cf. Cassiodorus, *Institutiones* 1.17.2.

51 For discussion of the distinction that Isidore draws between histories and annals see Matthew Kempshall, "Some Ciceronian Models for Einhard's Life of Charlemagne," *Viator* 26 (1995), 16–17.

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There is less certainty about how Isidore understood the relationship between chronicles and narrative histories. Chronicles were a form of historical writing, while narrative histories could also fall into the category of chronicles if they dealt with a succession of kings, as in the case of the *Historia Gothorum*. The blurred boundary between chronicles and histories can be illustrated by the decision by the authors of the texts known collectively as the *Chronicle of Alfonso* III, written in northern Spain at some point in the late 9th century, to use the *Historia Gothorum* rather than the *Chronica* as the baseline for their text.[52] The chronological ordering of the *Historia Gothorum* meant that it was a suitable basis from which later chroniclers could continue, while its more explicit emphasis on Visigothic history meant that it was more useful than the *Chronica* for Asturian historians, who by the 9th century were seeking to present their kingdom as standing in legitimate succession to the Goths.[53]

For Isidore, therefore chronicles were defined by form: the chronological ordering of the past. Histories were defined by their contents—that is, that they recounted the events of the past and put them to use in the present. Isidore, therefore, recognised that there were broad categories of historical writing but that they accomplished different objectives and took different forms. Isidore's sources influenced his delineation of these categories, but his own histories do not adhere to the strict distinctions between ideal historiographical types. Of course, this may be because the histories were written before he had laid down the theories. However, a more productive reading is to focus on the key features of all historical writing: its chronological ordering and its moral imperative, rather than its conformity or otherwise to strictly defined genre boundaries. Chronology and morality were thus structuring principles that underlay the entirety of Isidore's historical discourse.

The breadth of Isidore's writing about history raises questions about the inter-relations between his different historical works. As was noted above, the *De viris illustribus*, a catalogue of biographies of famous men, built on the list of biblical figures presented in *De ortu et obitu patrum* and the earlier works of the Christian historians Jerome and Gennadius to place orthodox Spaniards at the centre of universal church history. More purely "historical" works, such as the *Chronica Maiora* and the *Historia Gothorum* occupied complementary positions on a continuum: they were intimately connected, since they sought

52 Kenneth Baxter Wolf, *Conquerors and Chroniclers of Early Medieval Spain*, 2nd ed. (Liverpool: 1999), 43–46.

53 Julio Escalona, "Family Memories. Inventing Alfonso I of Asturias," in *Building legitimacy. Political discourses and forms of legitimation in medieval societies*, eds. Isabel Alfonso, Hugh Kennedy, and Julio Escalona (Leiden: 2004), 223–62.

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to praise the Visigoths and to discredit their barbarian and Roman opponents, using varying tactics to accomplish this. The *Historia Gothorum* emphasised the military power of the Visigoths in the recent past, while the *Chronica Maiora* tried to discredit the Romans by presenting them as politically and religiously illegitimate over a longer period. The *Chronica Maiora* enabled Isidore to tie the Visigoths into the development of universal history, positioning the newly orthodox people at the culmination of universal history and in legitimate possession of Spain, while the *Historia Gothorum* praised the orthodoxy and legitimacy of the Visigoths and their kings and demonstrated that they held Spain by right of conquest.[54] It is therefore unsurprising that the Visigoths and Spain are largely absent from the *Chronica Minora*, since Isidore had already exalted them to varying degrees in the *Chronica Maiora*, the *Historia Gothorum*, and the *De viris illustribus*.

There is a striking degree of continuity on these topics across Isidore's historical writings and between his histories and other works. The histories often align with one another thematically, and the manuscript transmission of the histories suggests that later copyists recognised that they were connected to one another in their focus on Visigothic-Nicene royal power within Spain. The inclusion of an epitomised version of Isidore's *Chronica* into the *Etymologiae* is further evidence of the integration of the histories into Isidore's overall output. Scholars have also noted the close association between Isidore's theological and polemical writings on the Jews and his depiction of Jewish history in the histories.[55]

Although Isidore's views developed over time—for example on the negative impact of the Byzantines on Spain and the need for the Hispano-Roman population to work with, rather than against, the Visigothic monarchy—these often represent intensifications of earlier positions, not absolute changes of opinion. Isidore built on the close working relationship that his brother, Leander of Seville, had enjoyed with the Visigothic kings under whom he held office, especially Reccared I (r. 586–601), who had been responsible for the conversion of the Visigoths from Homoian to Nicene Christianity.[56] An absolute belief in the righteousness of the Nicene cause was the single most important position underpinning Isidore's historical writings. The conversion narratives of the

54 Teillet, *Des Goths*, 465–69; Reydellet, "Les intentions idéologiques," 389; José Carlos Martín, "La *Crónica Universal* de Isidoro de Sevilla: circunstancias históricas e ideológicas de su composición y traducción de la misma," *Iberia* 4 (2001), 201–02, 207. See also: Wood, *The Politics of Identity*, 133–190.

55 Wolfram Drews, *The Unknown Neighbour. The Jew in the Thought of Isidore of Seville* (Leiden: 2006).

56 As explored in the chapter by Purificación Ubric Rabaneda in this volume.

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Visigoths (broadly speaking, from paganism and heresy towards Christian orthodoxy) and of the Roman-Byzantine Empire (from paganism to orthodoxy and then heresy) are the most important unifying strands running through his various histories. The conversion of the Visigoths to Nicene Christianity under Reccared in 587–89 stands as the pivotal moment in Isidore's recent history, affecting his depiction of the histories of the Roman (and Byzantine) Empire, Visigothic kingdom, and other "barbarian" groups within and beyond Spain.[57]

Isidore thus depicted the Visigoths positively, even when they were heretics, while he portrayed the Romans negatively, even when they adopted an orthodox position. Contemporary confessional considerations thus configured Isidore's depiction of the more distant past.[58] His positive views of the Visigoths meant that other barbarian groups, especially those who had defeated the Visigoths in the past, such as the Franks, and those who had occupied Spain before the Visigoths in the 5th century, such as the Vandals and the Sueves, were depicted negatively. Heretics and Jews were presented in a negative fashion due to the threat that they posed to the Nicene Christian consensus that Isidore sought to promote within Spain.[59] Isidore promoted consensus government in his writings on how the church should be run, and similar considerations underpinned his thinking on how the Visigothic kings should run the country in collaboration with their nobles and bishops. These ideas were given historiographical shape in the various histories.[60]

Isidore's focus on consensus reveals him as a pragmatist. The bishops were unlikely to get very much done on the ground without the approval of the king, his administration, and the provincial elites, both Visigothic and Hispano-Roman.[61] He seems to have realised that the Byzantines were no longer a realistic option—their oppressive taxes and religious deviance apparently threatened the Nicene consensus that he sought to promote between king, elite, and bishops within Spain.[62]

57 Jamie Wood, "Catholic heretics and heretical catholics: Isidore of Seville and the Religious History of the Goths," in *From Orosius to the Historia Silense: Four Essays on the Late Antique and Early Medieval Historiography of the Iberian Peninsula*, ed. David Hook (Bristol: 2005), 17–50.

58 Wood, *The Politics of Identity*, 191–231.

59 It is also likely that the Jews became a scapegoat within Spain after the conversion of the Visigoths removed the Arian threat. Céline Martin, "Les juifs visigothiques, un peuple hérétique," *Revue de l'histoire des religions* 234 (2017), 315–35. See the chapter by Raúl González Salinero in this volume for more on Isidore's views on the Jews.

60 See the chapters by Andrew Fear and Céline Martin in this volume.

61 Sam Koon and Jamie Wood, "Unity from disunity: law, rhetoric and power in the Visigothic kingdom," *European Review of History* 16 (2009), 793–808.

62 Wood, *The Politics of Identity*, 147–90.

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The manuscript traditions of the histories also point towards interrelationships between the texts. There are perhaps as few as three manuscripts containing any of Isidore's writings that were produced in the 7th-century Visigothic kingdom.[63] The number of manuscripts from Spain or elsewhere that predate the end of the Visigothic kingdom in the early 8th century and contain the historical works is also low. The manuscript evidence therefore does not offer much hope for developing our understanding of the context in which Isidore produced the works. Nevertheless, there are manuscripts from the late 8th, 9th, and early 10th centuries that contain the histories, both individually and in combination. These artefacts cannot inform us about Isidore's design for his histories, but they do tell us something about how the works were received, read, and repurposed in the centuries immediately after his death.

Among the earliest manuscripts (from the 10th century and before), Isidore's histories were either collated with other Isidorian works or copied into manuscripts with other late antique or early medieval histories. Such compendia seem to have been particularly popular in the Carolingian Empire.[64] The circulation of Isidore's works with those of other historians is particularly important because it suggests that his histories were understood as being integrated into the mainstream of Christian chronography and historiography, sitting comfortably alongside the foundational texts of late antique and early medieval historical writing in Latin: the *Chronicle* of Eusebius-Jerome, Rufinus's translation and continuation of Eusebius's *Ecclesiastical History*, and Orosius's *Seven Books of History against the Pagans*.[65] They were also included alongside texts on Frankish history and those reflecting the increasing Carolingian interest in Alexander the Great.[66] Similarly, Isidore's *De viris illustribus* circulated alongside the earlier works of Jerome and Gennadius. Together with the mid-7th-century *De viris illustribus* of Ildefonsus of Toledo they became essential

63 Matthew T. Hussey, "Transmarinis litteris: Southumbria and the Transmission of Isidore's Synonyma," *Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 107 (2008), 143–44, provides details of these manuscripts.

64 For example, Rosamond McKitterick, *History and Memory in the Carolingian World* (Cambridge: 2004); Helmut Reimitz, "Ein karolingisches Geschichtsbuch aus Saint-Amand. Der Codex Vindobonensis palat. 473," in *Text – Shrift – Codex. Quellenkundliche Arbeiten aus dem Institut für Österreichische Geschichtsforschung*, eds. Christoph Egger and Herwig Weigl (Vienna: 2000), 34–90. See the chapter by Sinéad O'Sullivan in this volume for Isidore's reception in the Carolingian period.

65 Paris, BNF lat. 4860 includes Isidore's *Chronicle* alongside a number of other chronographical and computistical writings. Paris, BNF lat. 10910 contains the *Chronicle* of Isidore alongside that of Pseudo-Fredegar, Martín, ed. *Isidori Hispalensis Chronica*, 73*–78*; 96–97.

66 McKitterick, *History and Memory*, 28.

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biographical and bibliographical resources for historians and librarians in Frankia and northern Spain in the 9th and 10th centuries.[67]

Early manuscripts in which Isidore's historical writings circulate together are particularly important. In Wolfenbuttel, Herzog August Bibliothek, Helmstedt, 532, produced in 820 in Salzburg or Wissemburg, the *De ortu et obitu patrum*, the *Chronica*, and extracts from books 6 and 7 of the *Etymologiae* accompany other Isidorian and pseudo-Isidorian writings, as well as works by other authors.[68] El Escurial, R.11.18 also transmits a range of Isidorian historical and non-historical writings, along with a number of other historical texts, including: the second redaction of Isidore's *Historia Gothorum*, his *Etymologiae* and *De natura rerum*, the *Breviary* of Rufius Festus, and the *Chronicon* of Eusebius-Jerome.[69]

Of even greater significance are the manuscripts now situated in Bern (Burgerbibliothek, 83), St Gallen (Stiftsbibliothek, 133), and St Petersburg/Paris (Publichnaja Biblioteka im. M.E. Saltykove Shchedrina, lat. Q.I.v.20/BNF, lat. 14144).[70] In each of these manuscripts, the dates of which range from the late 8th century to the first half of the 10th century and all of which derive from Frankia, Isidore's *Chronica* is copied alongside a range of other late antique and Frankish historical writings. Most importantly, included in these historical writings are Isidore's *De Laude Spaniae* (in two manuscripts) and *Laus Gothorum* (in all three), respectively the preface and epilogue to the second redaction of the *Historia Gothorum*, which celebrate the greatness of Spain and the power of the Visigoths. The praise writings are inserted directly after the *Chronica* in the manuscripts. An early-9th-century manuscript, León Cathedral 22, seems to have undergone a similar process of production. It contains the *De Laude Spaniae* alongside the *De viris illustribus* of Jerome, Gennadius, Isidore, and Ildefonsus.[71] These cases suggest that, at various times, Isidore's *Chronica* and *De viris illustribus* were read and copied alongside the second redaction of the *Historia Gothorum*. Later copyists deliberately extracted the praise writings from the *Historia Gothorum* and inserted them directly after the *Chronica* or the *De viris illustribus*, excluding the main parts of the *Historia*. If the intention was to create an Isidorian historical compendium, then the *Chronica*, *De viris illustribus*, and the praise writings would have emphasised Hispano-Visigothic particularism. This agenda is largely implicit in the

67 Carmen Codoñer Merino, ed., *El "De viris illustribus" de Isidoro de Sevilla* (Salamanca: 1964), 87–94; McKitterick, *History and Memory*, 238–39.

68 Martín, ed. *Isidori Hispalensis Chronica*, 91*–96*.

69 Rodríguez Alonso, ed., *Las historias*, 126–27.

70 Martín, ed. *Isidori Hispalensis Chronica*, 58*–61*, 83*–87*.

71 Rodríguez Alonso, ed., *Las historias*, 125–26.

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Chronica and *De viris illustribus*, but it would have been intensified when such texts were read against the triumphal rhetoric of the praise texts. Whatever the reasons for the decision to include the *Chronica*, *De viris illustribus*, the *De Laude Spaniae*, and the *Laus Gothorum* in the same manuscripts, their relationship is strong evidence that some later readers and compilers made close connections between the different parts of Isidore's historical output.

Yet more evidence for the interconnections between Isidore's historical writings is provided by Madrid BAH 78, which dates to the 10th or 11th century.[72] The manuscript transmits a range of historical writings from the post-Visigothic period in northern Spain and a number of Isidorian and pseudo-Isidorian texts. The Isidorian writings include, in order: the histories of the Vandals and the Sueves; the *Chronica*; the *Historia Gothorum*; the *De laude Spaniae* (which normally acts as the preface to the second redaction of the *Historia Gothorum*). Madrid BAH 78 therefore points towards active engagement with the Isidorian historiographical patrimony in northern Spain in the 10th and 11th centuries. As part of this process, Isidore's histories were broken up and repositioned in combination with one another and with later Spanish histories.

The earliest manuscripts therefore provide some support for the thesis that Isidore's histories were designed to be read together. Of course, the destruction of the Visigothic kingdom by the Arab-Berber armies in the early 8th century means that it is impossible for us to know much about how Isidore's histories were received by the generations that followed him within Spain.[73] An indirect result of the invasion was, however, the movement of Spanish manuscripts and manpower elsewhere in Western Europe. This facilitated the dispersal of Isidorian historiography. Examination of the manuscripts of Isidore's histories reveals that, whether or not he intended them to be read as a group, later copyists made associations between the different historical writings.

These associations emerged within three main contexts: first, the growth of historiographical collection and production within Frankia in the 8th, 9th, and 10th centuries; second, the educational reform programmes of Ireland, Frankia, and Anglo-Saxon England, in which Isidore's writings played a pivotal role; and third, in northern Spain in the 9th and 10th centuries.[74] Sometimes Isidore's histories were connected with each other, with their late antique historiographical sources, and with other Isidorian writings. On the majority of occasions, however, a far more complex process went on: the histories were

72 Rodríguez Alonso, ed., *Las historias*, 127–28; Martín ed., *Isidori Hispalensis Chronica*, 111*–113*.

73 For more on this, see Mark Tizzoni's chapter in this volume.

74 For Isidore's reception in Anglo-Saxon England and early medieval Ireland, see Martin J. Ryan's chapter in this volume.

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copied together, but in a creative manner. They were broken down into their constituent parts and put back together to create new historical texts. Importantly, these "new" histories often emphasised the same features of history as seem to have underlain Isidore's work, celebrating Spanish and Visigothic particularism (even triumphalism) and promoting grammatical, spiritual, and historical education within the church. On this interpretation, those who engaged with Isidore's histories in the centuries after his death actually intensified the driving forces behind the Isidorian historiographical programme rather than dissipating them.

6 The Purpose of History-Writing

Early medieval history-writing was a process by which people sought to articulate ideas about how and why present times had taken on their distinctive shape: "a clearly structured concept of time [...] can only be established within an agreement to put events in a temporal and causal relationship. History is exegetical commentary."[75] The definition of history in the *Etymologiae* underlines this point, making clear that the genre only incorporated information that was deemed worth recording and served a moral purpose. Writing historically involved making a claim about the truth or accuracy of what was being written.

> A history is a narration of deeds accomplished; through it what occurred in the past is distinguished. History is so called from the Greek term ἱστορεῖν ("inquire, observe"), that is, from "seeing" or from "knowing." Indeed, among the ancients no one would write a history unless he had been present and had seen what was to be written down, for we grasp with our eyes things that occur better than what we gather with our hearing, since what is seen is revealed without falsehood. This discipline has to do with Grammar, because whatever is worthy of remembrance is committed to writing. And for this reason, histories are called "monuments," because they grant a remembrance of deeds that have been done.[76]

75 Richard Corradini, "The rhetoric of crisis. *Computus* and *Liber annalis* in early ninth-century Fulda," in *The Construction of Communities in the Early Middle Ages: Texts, Resources and Artefacts*, eds. Richard Corradini, Max Diesenberger and Helmut Reimitz (Leiden: 2003), 296.

76 "Historia est narratio rei gestae, per quam ea, quae in praeterito facta sunt, dinoscuntur. Dicta autem Graece historia ἀπὸ τοῦ ἱστορεῖν, id est a videre vel cognoscere. Apud veteres

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Two chapters later, Isidore explains that history is a useful form of writing because it can instruct people in the present through the use of past examples:

> Histories of peoples are no impediment to those who wish to read useful works, for many wise people have imparted the past deeds of humankind in histories for the instruction of the living. Through history they handle a final reckoning back through seasons and years, and they investigate many indispensable matters through the succession of consuls and kings.[77]

Similar ideas are present elsewhere in Isidore's writings. In the *Sententiae*, for example, Isidore discusses historical and other ways of understanding divine law: "Therefore, in this way history ought to preserve faith, so that we must both interpret it morally and understand it spiritually."[78] Writing about the past was a powerful carrier for moral and spiritual truth.

The importance of history-writing for Isidore is further signalled by the numerous references that he makes to "history," "histories", and individual historians as sources of information, across his different works. For example, in the *Versus*, he contrasts history with fables or poetry.[79] Reference to "history" was a way of demonstrating that his sources were reliable and thus that what he was saying was trustworthy. In addition to emphasising the traditions and forms of historical writing, there is, in Isidore's definition of history, a focus on the moral value of history. According to Isidore, history is used by wise people for the instruction of the living. Isidore held this opinion in common with the majority of ancient and late antique historians, who used historical writing to make didactic points, to moralise, and to provide examples from the past for the

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enim nemo conscribebat historiam, nisi is qui interfuisset, et ea quae conscribenda essent vidisset. Melius enim oculis quae fiunt deprehendimus, quam quae auditione colligimus. Quae enim videntur, sine mendacio proferuntur. Haec disciplina ad Grammaticam pertinet, quia quidquid dignum memoria est litteris mandatur. Historiae autem ideo monumenta dicuntur, eo quod memoriam tribuant rerum gestarum. Series autem dicta per translationem a sertis florum invicem conprehensarum," Isidore, *Etymologiae* 1.41, trans. Barney et al., 67.

77 "Historiae gentium non inpediunt legentibus in his quae utilia dixerunt. Multi enim sapientes praeterita hominum gesta ad institutionem praesentium historiis indiderunt, siquidem et per historiam summa retro temporum annorumque supputatio conprehenditur, et per consulum regumque successum multa necessaria perscrutantur," Isidore, *Etymologiae* 1.43, trans. Barney et al., 67.

78 "Ergo sic historiae oportet fidem tenere, ut eam et moraliter debeamus interpretare, et spiritaliter intellegere," Isidore, *Sententiae* 1.18.12; see also Isidore, *Sententiae* 1.19.6.

79 Isidore, *Versus*, 12; de Carlos Villamarín, "Dares Frigio."

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instruction of the present.[80] The same was true for other Christian authors who wrote about history in more abstract terms. Cassiodorus, whose *Institutiones*, written in 6th-century Italy, was an important source for the *Etymologiae*, also stressed the moral imperative underpinning history-writing.[81]

It was not simply the content of history that could drive home moral points for the instruction of contemporaries: the form in which history was presented could also further this objective. In his *Sententiae*, Isidore notes that the actions of kings play an exemplary role for their subjects: "Kings either improve or overturn the life of their subjects easily by their examples, and for that reason it is necessary that the leader is not found wanting, lest with the unpunished licence of his sin he establishes a pattern of sinning."[82] As was noted above, Isidore's *Historia Gothorum* and *Chronica* are both structured according to the reigns of kings and emperors, respectively. At the start of the *Historia Gothorum*, for example, Isidore notes that the work compiles the deeds of individual kings in succession: "In the past, many centuries ago, they [the Goths] employed military leaders and later kings, whose reigns it is fitting to review quickly and in succession, weaving together the information extracted from the histories about their identities and deeds."[83] Isidore also described his *Chronica Maiora* as recording history according to a succession of reigns.[84] We should therefore see a close interpenetration between the moral objectives of history-writing and their practical working out in the exemplary actions of rulers.

It is significant that Isidore refers to his history as reviewing the reigns of kings quickly because the style of historical writing was understood to help the author to put across moral messages. Ancient writers on history discussed the

80 For moralising in ancient history writing, see Michael Grant, *Greek and Roman Historians: Information and Misinformation* (London: 1995), 85–87; David Rohrbacher, *The Historians of Late Antiquity* (London: 2002), 151; Kempshall, "Some Ciceronian Models."

81 Cassiodorus, *Institutiones* 1.17.1. For the relationship between Cassiodorus and Isidore, see T. Stettner, "Cassiodors Enzyklopädie eine Quelle Isidors," *Philologus* 82 (1927), 241–42; Jacques Fontaine, "Cassiodore et Isidore: l'evolution de l'encyclopedisme latin du VIe au VIIe siecle," in *Settimane di studio* 32 (1986), 72–91.

82 "Reges uitam subditorum facile exemplis suis uel aedificant, uel subuertunt, ideoque principem non oportet delinquere, ne formam peccandi faciat peccati eius inpunita licentia," Isidore, *Sententiae* 3.50.6; cf. Isidore, *Sententiae* 3.47.3; 2.11.7; Pierre Cazier, *Isidore de Séville et la Naissance de l'Espagne Catholique* (Paris: 1994), 247–48.

83 "Per multa quippe retro saecula ducibus usi sunt, postea regibus, quorum oportet tempora per ordinem cursim exponere et quo nomine actuque renauerint, de historiis libata retexere," Isidore, *Historia Gothorum*, second redaction, 2 (the first redaction has a similar entry).

84 Isidore, *Chronica Maiora*, both redactions, 1.

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need to strike a balance between an overly detailed and wordy narrative and excessive brevity.[85] For Isidore, the need to keep things brief was paramount:

> Often extended narrative causes the memory of reading to be forgotten for the reason of length. Because if it is concise then it is read without effort, and when the book has been removed the meaning is drawn back into the soul, and those things which have been read, being recalled, will be extracted with very little memory.[86]

Brevity was thus, in Isidore's opinion, a way of articulating moral truths in the most efficient manner possible.[87] Abbreviation was also common in Isidore's biblical commentaries, and, as in the histories, such practices were underpinned by didactic and moralising principles.[88] Brief writing was therefore the best way of ensuring that his message remained in the mind of the audience. An excessively detailed historical narrative would achieve the opposite aim and blind the audience to the truth.[89]

7 Conclusion

In addition to the usually negative appraisals of Isidore's attempts to write history, scholars often used to comment on the dearth of Iberian historiogaphy in the period after Isidore in general. In 1970, Hillgarth went a long way toward dispelling this misapprehension by demonstrating that there was actually a great deal of historical writing available in Visigothic Spain, both in the form of original compositions and via the circulation of earlier texts.[90] New histories on the classical model may not have been composed (just as they were not composed elsewhere in the post-Roman West), but that does not mean that scholars in 7th-century Spain were not reading histories and using them in

85 Luke Pitcher, *Writing Ancient History: An Introduction to Classical Historiography* (London: 2009), 125–26.

86 "Saepe prolixa lectio longitudinis causa memoriam legentis oblitterat. Quod si breuis sit, submotoque libro sententia retractetur in animo, tunc sine labore legitur, et ea quae lecta sunt recolendo memoria minime exciduntur," Isidore, *Sententiae* 3.14.8; see also Isidore, *Etymologies* 2.29.1.

87 Jamie Wood, "*Brevitas* in the historical writings of Isidore of Seville," in *Early Medieval Spain – A Symposium. Papers of the Medieval Hispanic Research Seminar*, eds. Alan Deyermond and Martin J Ryan (London: 2010), 37–53.

88 Uitvlugt, "The sources," 86–87.

89 Wood, "*Brevitas*," 44–47.

90 Hillgarth, "Historiography."

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their writings. An overly deterministic focus on genre and on models of historical writing that derive from classical and ancient historiography has sometimes blinded scholars to the true significance of historical writing—understood as any kind of writing that is past-focussed—to unravelling contemporary mentalities.

The emphasis that is laid on the failure of the Visigoths to write "history" is to misunderstand the true importance of history to the Isidorian and post-Isidorian project in Spain and, in my view, the role of the past in the early medieval period in general. We know that the works of Isidore were circulating later in the 7th century in Spain, as were many of the works from which Isidore had drawn inspiration. Education in history and through historical exemplars played an important role in the pedagogic projects of Visigothic churchmen too. Scholars after Isidore, such as Taio of Zaragoza, continued the work of excerpting, summarising, and glossing Patristic authors in order to make them useful for the clergy and monks of the Visigothic kingdom. People who came after Isidore in 7th-century Spain wrote histories of different sorts, from Braulio of Zaragoza's hagiography of St Aemilian to Julian of Toledo's history of King Wamba.[91] Several other hagiographies were written. Although these texts may include information of varying degrees of historicity, they also provide powerful further evidence of the important of past-oriented writing to contemporaries.[92] The purposes of these hagiographical texts were, like the histories of Isidore, to promote particular visions of the past that emphasised the historical importance of particular individuals or communities.[93]

There was also a continued interest in chronograpy in the later 7th century. Lists of Visigothic kings (the so-called *laterculus Visigothorum*) were written.[94] Their organisation by reign is exactly the same as that of Isidore's *Chronica* (imperial reigns structure the text) and the *Historia Gothorum* (organised by reigns of Visigothic kings) and, like their predecessors, the king lists include details of length of reigns and, in a limited number of cases, some information about historical events. The fact that Isidore's *Chronica* was used as the starting point for later histories and chronicles in northern Spain implies that they, too,

91 A.T. Fear, "Taming Rasputin? Braulio and St Aemilian," *Medium Aevum* 76 (2007), 191–206; Joaquín Martínez Pizarro, *The Story of Wamba. Julian of Toledo's Historia Wambae Regis* (Washington, DC: 2005).

92 See the introductions and texts collected in A.T. Fear, *Lives of the Visigothic fathers* (Liverpool: 1997).

93 For more on the context in which Isidore was working, see the chapters by Santiago Castellanos and Graham Barrett in this volume.

94 On the *Laterculus*, see Mario Huete Fudio, "Fuentes menores para el estudio de la historiografía latina de la alta edad media hispánica," *Medievalismo* 4 (1994), 7–12.

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were being copied earlier, while, as we have seen, there are Spanish transmission histories for the *Historia Gothorum* and the *De viris illustribus*.

It is also worth considering eschatological writings from Visigothic Spain if we are to understand fully the role of history in the religious imagination of Visigothic Spain. I have argued elsewhere that thinking about the end of time in Visigothic Spain involved considering what had gone before it, inevitably drawing the author and his audience into history.[95] All of the different versions of Isidore's *Chronica* end with warnings that the date of the end of the world is known only to God, in order to discourage eschatological speculation. Other eschatological texts from the 7th century, including Julian of Toledo's *De comprobatione sextae aetatis*, incorporate brief overviews of history. Importantly, the ages of the world are organised in Julian's *De comprobatione* in the same way as they had been in the second redaction of Isidore's *Chronica Maiora*.[96] These works—and many others beside them—are not framed as classical histories, but they do include accounts of Christian world history in its entirety, and, in passing, they incorporate substantial amounts of historical information. This may not be "historical" information as modern historians or classicists conceive of it, but accounts of biblical figures and events would clearly have been considered historical by Isidore and his contemporaries. Isidore's histories and chronicles were thus penned within and influenced by an intellectual world in which history played a pivotal role. Isidore's Spain was not some kind of historiographical wasteland, but a place in which history was fundamental to understanding past and present, as well as to influencing the future.

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95 Jamie Wood, "Individual and Collective Salvation in Late Visigothic Spain," in *The Church, the Afterlife and the Fate of the Soul*, eds. P. Clarke and T. Claydon (Woodbridge: 2009), 74–86.

96 Wood, "Individual and Collective Salvation," 80.

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CHAPTER 7

Isidore of Seville and Science

Faith Wallis

1 Introduction

As Ascension Day 735 drew near, Bede the Venerable lay dying in his Northumbrian monastic cell. According to his disciple Cuthbert, he was anxious to complete two projects: turning the Gospel of John into the vernacular "to the great profit of the church," and translating or making selections (*exceptiones*) from Isidore of Seville's *Liber rotarum*, i.e. *De natura rerum* (*On the Nature of Things*), "for he said, 'I cannot have my children learning what is not true (*mendacium*), and losing their labour on this after I am gone.'"[1] This statement has often been taken as evidence that Bede held Isidore in low esteem, and that the *mendacia* he was concerned with were Isidore's. After all, in Chapter 35 of his mature synthesis of *computus*, *The Reckoning of Time* (*De temporum ratione*), Bede had compared different dates for the beginning of the seasons and declared his preference for the authority of "the Greeks and Romans" rather than "the Spaniards" and their bishop Isidore.[2] Many have concluded that this is a criticism of Isidore's reliability.[3]

But is this the case? The beginnings of the seasons, unlike the equinoxes, were not determined by astronomy, but by custom. Where usages differed, Bede gave precedence to the ancients, but this is not the same thing as saying the moderns are wrong. Indeed, the very fact that Bede thought it worthwhile to spend his last days in the company of Isidore's *On the Nature of Things* undermines the argument that he disdained him. Cuthbert does not say that Bede was correcting Isidore, but rather that he was excerpting, or perhaps translating his work. The *mendacia* may be the ignorance Isidore's words would dispel, or even a faulty translation already in circulation.[4] One suspects that

1 *Epistola de obitu Bedae*, in Bede, *Historia ecclesiastica gentis Anglorum*, ed. and trans. Bertram Colgrave and R.A.B. Mynors (Oxford: 1969), 582–83.

2 Bede, *De temporum ratione* 35.

3 See for example C.W. Jones, *Bedae opera de temporibus* (Cambridge MA: 1943), 131.

4 Calvin B. Kendall and Faith Wallis, *Bede, On the Nature of Things and On Times* (Liverpool: 2010), 13–20; William McCready, "Bede and the Isidorean Legacy," *Mediaeval Studies* 57 (1995),

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the conventional view owes much to scholarly prejudice: Bede is admired as a "scientist"; Isidore's learning is derided as superficial and unoriginal.[5]

More pertinently, Bede's first dated work (702), also called *On the Nature of Things*, is essentially derived from Isidore's book; perhaps Cuthbert, and even Bede himself, appreciated the symbolism of closing his earthly career with the very enterprise which began it. Bede recast Isidore by removing the chapters on the units of time (these he relocated to his companion treatise *On Times* [*De temporibus*]) and adding information from Pliny and Irish cosmographies,[6] but much of the balance is direct quotation from his model. When Bede revised these two books as *The Reckoning of Time* in 725, he retained what he had borrowed from Isidore and added further material from the *Etymologies*. Throughout his career, Bede used Isidore as a major resource for information about the material cosmos and issues concerning time, as did the Irish computists, cosmographers, and exegetes, and the Carolingians who followed in his wake.[7] A lineage of books entitled *On the Nature of Things*, stretching from Hrabanus Maurus (d. 856) to Alexander Neckam (1157–1217), followed Bede by borrowing Isidore's title, as well as their scientific content from his *Etymologies*, as did encyclopedias with more creative titles, like Vincent of Beauvais's *Speculum naturale*.[8] Isidore's authority as a touchstone of erudition guaranteed

41–73; William McCready, "Bede, Isidore, and the *Epistola Cuthberti*," *Traditio* 50 (1995), 75–94.

5 Bede as "scientist:" Thomas R. Eckenrode, "The Growth of a Scientific Mind: Bede's Early and Late Scientific Writings," *Downside Review* 94 (1976), 187–212; Thomas R. Eckenrode, "Venerable Bede as a Scientist," *American Benedictine Review* 22 (1971), 486–507; Wesley Stevens, *Bede's Scientific Achievement* (Jarrow: 1985). Isidore's science by contrast is "the merest sketch of ancient learning": Stephen C. McCluskey, *Astronomies and Cultures in Early Medieval Europe* (Cambridge: 1998), 125. A typically dismissive assessment is found in Richard C. Dales, *The Scientific Achievement of the Middle Ages* (Philadelphia: 1973), 10.

6 Kendall and Wallis, *Bede, On the Nature of Things and On Times*, 12–13; Bernard Ribémont, *Les origines des encyclopédies médiévales d'Isidore de Séville aux carolingiens* (Paris: 2001), 214–71.

7 Kendall and Wallis, *Bede, On the Nature of Things and On Times*, 13–20. Cf. the chapters by Martin J. Ryan, Immo Wartjes and Sinéad O'Sullivan in the present volume. On the transmission of Isidore's *De natura rerum* to the end of the Carolingian period, see the chapter by Martín José Carlos, "Isidorus Hispalensis ep., *De natura rerum*," in *La trasmissione dei testi latini del Medioevo. Mediaeval Latin Texts and their Transmission*, vol. 2, eds. Paolo Chiesa and Lucia Castaldi (Florence: 2005), 353–62. To appreciate the heavy exploitation of *De natura rerum* in Carolingian compendia of *computus* it suffices to consult the source index of Arno Borst, *Schriften zur Komputistik im Frankenreich von 721 bis 818*, MGH, Quellen zur Geistesgeschichte des Mittelalters 21, 3 vols. (Hannover: 2006), 1489–490.

8 M. Paulmier-Foucart, "Les *Etymologies* d'Isidore de Séville dans le *Speculum maius* de Vincent de Beauvais," in *L'Europe héritière de l'Espagne wisigothique*, eds. Jacques Fontaine and

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the integration into medieval clerical culture of a wide range of scientific topics and disciplines that far exceeded the practical requirements of exegesis or *computus*.

Isidore's profound and durable influence is also related to his attitude towards ancient science. Compared with the great Fathers of the 4th and 5th centuries or his contemporary Gregory the Great, Isidore took a broadminded and almost relaxed approach to secular learning. He perhaps had less to fear from any continued intellectual attraction of paganism or classical culture than did earlier generations of Christian thinkers, but he also had a positive vision of the value of that culture for ecclesiastical and national revival in Spain.[9] When it came to matters of science, he drew on both classical and Patristic writings, seemingly without discrimination: indeed, he often "reverse engineered" his information from allusions to ancient science and philosophy found on the pages of Lactantius, Augustine, Ambrose, Jerome, and the pseudo-Clementine *Recognitions*.[10] Unlike Cassiodorus, who was certainly one of his major inspirations, Isidore did not segregate "divine" and "human" learning.[11] He wove exegesis and allegory into the cosmology of *On the Nature of Things*, but not consistently; and the books of the *Etymologies* on Scripture, God and the saints, and the Church are embedded between the liberal and learned disciplines (books 1–5), and the survey of the natural world and the mechanical arts (books 11–20). In both works, Isidore exploited classical handbooks, like Hyginus' *On Astronomy*, commentaries on the *Timaeus* of Plato, and compendia like Solinus' *Collectanea* and Pliny's *Natural History* (*Historia naturalis*), but a significant percentage of his science comes from the Latin poets—notably Lucan, Virgil, and Lucretius—and their scholiasts, particularly Servius.

On the Nature of Things is the first comprehensive work on cosmology by a Latin Christian writer that is not a commentary on the account of creation in

Christine Pellistrandi (Madrid: 1992), 269–83; Mary Franklin-Brown, *Reading the World: Encyclopedic Writing in the Scholastic Age* (Chicago: 2012), esp. 100–01, 224–25, 227–29; Ribémont, *Les origines* 273–313.

9 Jacques Fontaine, *Isidore de Séville et la culture classique dans l'Espagne wisigothique* [hereafter Fontaine, *Isidore culture*], 2nd ed. (Paris: 1983), esp. part 6, Chs. 1, 3–4, 6; Jacques Fontaine, *Isidore de Séville. Genèse et originalité de la culture hispanique a temps des Wisigoths* (Turnhout: 2000), Ch. 16.

10 Fontaine, *Isidore culture*, 389–91, 543–45.

11 Ribémont, *Les origines*, 19–38; Jacques Fontaine, "Cassiodore et Isidore: l'évolution de l'encyclopédisme latin du VIe au VIIe siècle," *Settimane di Studio* 32 (1986), 72–91.

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Genesis.[12] Its format—a survey of the world-system from the heavens down to the earth—yokes astronomy to the topics encompassed by Aristotelian *meteora*: atmospheric phenomena, weather, tides and the water cycle, and seismic and volcanic activity. While astronomy focused on the regularities of heavenly motion, meteorology sought to explain how sublunar events, although inherently unpredictable, are nonetheless natural consequences of the interactions of earth, air, water, and fire.[13] Clouds (Isidore tells us) are formed from *water*, but when *wind* agitates them, they are set on *fire*, producing lightning. Earthquakes can be caused by gusting winds in subterranean caverns, the collapse of underground caves, and buried rivers.[14]

On the Nature of Things also innovates by beginning with a survey of the units of time, from the day up to the year with its division into seasons and into astronomical quarters marked by the solstices and equinoxes (Chs 1–8). This is therefore a summary of classical calendar time; although it was excerpted into works on *computus*, notably by Bede, it does not discuss the management of the Christian calendar or the calculation of Easter. When Isidore deals with units of time in the *Etymologies*, he separates this subject from astronomy (book 3) and cosmology (book 13), locating it instead in book 5, as part of his treatment of law, as if time-keeping served essentially as a function of social order. *Computus*, on the other hand, is located in book 6, dedicated to Scripture and ecclesiastical observances and offices. There the Paschal tables are treated as a special type of Christian graphic representation of information, directly after canon tables. While *computus* was destined to evolve into a platform for early medieval scientific learning, Isidore does not seem to have regarded it in this light.[15]

12 The critical edition is by Jacques Fontaine, *Isidore de Séville: Traité de la nature*, 2nd edition (Paris: 2002); the translation is by Calvin B. Kendall and Faith Wallis, *Isidore of Seville: On the Nature of Things* (Liverpool: 2016).

13 Liba Taub, *Ancient Meteorology* (London: 2003).

14 Isidore, *De natura rerum* 30.2 and 46; Isidore's explanations of earthquakes closely match those of Lucretius, *De natura rerum* 6.557–95. Whether Isidore intended to give his book the same title as Lucretius' poem is a matter of debate. This was the title given by Braulio of Zaragoza in his *Renotatio librorum domini Isidori*, ed. J.C. Martín, CCSL 113B (Turnhout: 2006), 201–02. MSS from the 7th and 8th centuries either have no title, or the rubric *De mundo* or *Liber rotarum*. *De natura rerum* is standard from the 9th century onwards, and is particularly associated with the long recension of the text that probably represents Isidore's final edition: see Calvin B. Kendall and Faith Wallis, *Isidore of Seville: On the Nature of Things* (Liverpool: 2016), 38–40.

15 Isidore's *computus* and its reception is discussed in a separate chapter of the present volume, by Immo Wartjes.

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The *Etymologies*[16] has long been hailed as the first Christian "encyclopedia,"[17] and if this anachronistic term can be problematic, it nonetheless reflects the way medieval readers treated this book as a rich, flexible, and useful repository of authoritative knowledge. The etymological method ultimately proved less interesting than "the ecumenical breadth of the work, and … its staggering accretion of detail."[18] Much of that breadth and detail concern subjects which, for a modern reader, constitute science: mathematics, including astronomy (book 3); the *On the Nature of Things*' constellation of cosmology, meteorology, and geography (books 13–14); human biology and psychology (book 11); animals (book 12); and minerals (book 16). Plants are subsumed within the techniques of agriculture (book 17), but the supremely scientific *ars* is medicine, the "Second Philosophy" that, like the first philosophy, deals with the entire human person and draws on all the liberal disciplines (book 5, esp. 5.13).

2 Isidore's "Science," Isidore's "Nature"

Before surveying the content of these works,[19] however, it is necessary to adjust our modern expectations of science to the categories that Isidore recognized,

16 The edition by Wallace M. Lindsay, *Isidori Hispalensis Episcopi Etymologiarum sive Originum libri XX*, 2 vols. (Oxford: 1911), is being replaced by book-by-book critical editions, with facing page translations in the vernacular of the editor, published by Les Éditions Les Belles Lettres in Paris. The volumes cited in this chapter are: *Etymologies Book 2: Rhetoric*, ed. Peter K. Marshall (1983); *Etymologiae III: De mathematica,* eds. G. Gasparotto and Jean-Yves Guillaumin (2009); *Etymologiae XI: De homine et portentibus*, ed. F. Gasti (2010); *Étymologies livre XII: Des animaux*, ed. Jacques André (1986); *Etymologiae XIII: De mundo et partibus*, ed. G. Gasparotto (2004); *Étymologies livre XIV: De terra,* ed. Olga Spevak (2011); *Etymologiae XVI: De las piedras y de los metales*, ed. José Feáns Landeira (2011); *Étymologies livre XVII: De l'agriculture*, ed. Jacques André (1981). Translations here, unless otherwise indicated, are from Stephen A. Barney, W.J. Lewis, J.A. Beach and Oliver Berghof, *The Etymologies of Isidore of Seville* (Cambridge: 2006). On the transmission of *Etymologies*, see the chapter by Carmen Codoñer, "Isidorus Hispalensis ep., *Etymologiae*," in *La trasmissione dei testi latini del Medioevo*, vol. 2, eds. Chiesa and Castaldi, 274–99.

17 This is the argument of Ribémont, *Les origines*, and it stands in a long tradition, beginning with Ernest Brehaut, *An Encyclopedist of the Dark Ages: Isidore of Seville* (New York: 1912) and consolidated by Jacques Fontaine, "Isidore de Séville et la mutation de l'encyclopédisme antique," *Cahiers de civilisation mondiale* 9 (1966), 520–38.

18 A.H. Merrills, "Isidore's *Etymologies*: On Words and Things," in *Encyclopedism from Antiquity to the Renaissance*, eds. Jason König and Greg Woolf (Cambridge: 2014), 312.

19 This chapter will concentrate on these two works, but Isidore composed other books in which he included some scientific material, notably book 1 of the *Differences* (*De differentiis I*); the *Book of Numbers* (*Liber numerorum*), a handbook of numerology for exegetes; and the *Sentences* (*Sententiae*). For a discussion of the way in which, for example, his

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and to clarify what he understood by science's epistemic object, "nature." "Science" in the modern sense of the word is a 19th-century coinage, and though Isidore certainly could conceive of factual knowledge about, and models of, the physical world and its contents, including living beings, there was no single term or discipline which for him encompassed such knowledge.[20] For Isidore, *scientia* denoted securely established rational knowledge on any subject (*cum res aliqua certa ratione percipitur*), as distinct from uncertain "opinion" (*opiniatio*). But knowledge about the physical world is not necessarily *scientia.* In fact, Isidore's illustrative example of *opiniatio* is cosmology:

> … for instance whether the sun is as large as it seems to be or is larger than the whole earth, or whether the moon is spherical or concave, or whether the stars are stuck to the sky or are carried through the air in a free course, or of what size and what material the heavens themselves may be, whether they are at rest and immobile or are whirling at unbelievable speed, or how thick the earth is, or on what foundation it endures balanced and suspended.[21]

Isidore's notion of "natural philosophy" is indeterminate as well, since he entertains different schemes for locating natural philosophy within the larger project of philosophy. The tripartite Platonic division of philosophy into "natural (*naturalis*) which in Greek is 'physics' (*physica*)", moral, and rational or logical defines natural philosophy as that which "discusses the investigation of nature" using the mode of "inquiring" The founder of *physica*, Thales of Miletus, "examined the first principles of the sky and the power of natural things (*rerum naturalium*) with contemplative reason." But Isidore then adds that Plato divided *physica* into the four mathematical disciples of arithmetic, geometry, music, and astronomy.[22] The *disciplinae*, though, are defined as "concerned with things that have only one possible outcome", as distinct from

ideas about the human body as microcosm appears in these three works, see Fontaine, *Isidore culture* pt. 5, Ch. 3, esp. 649–50, 654–57, 663–65, 670.

20 On the challenge of discussing "science" in early medieval culture, see Faith Wallis, "*Si Naturam Quaeras*: Reframing Bede's 'Science'," in *Tradition and Innovation in the Writings of the Venerable Bede*, ed. Scott DeGregorio (Morgantown: 2006), 61–94; Faith Wallis, "Bede's 'Science'," in *The Cambridge Companion to Bede*, ed. Scott DeGregorio (Cambridge: 2010), 113–26.

21 Isidore, *Etymologiae* 2.23.2, trans. Barney *et al.*, 79. Isidore is drawing on Lactantius, *Institutiones* 3.3.4.

22 Both the definition of *scientia* and the cosmology example are from *Etymologies* 3.24.3–4; cf. Fontaine, *Isidore culture*, pt. 5, Ch. 3, esp. 647–48.

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the *artes* that consist of "matters that can turn out in different ways."[23] This aligns them with *scientia* as knowledge which is necessary and determinate, about objective realities; it would apply to both abstract numbers and concrete material entities.

Isidore offers a second division of philosophy, this time from Cassiodorus. Philosophy is divided into speculative and practical, and speculative philosophy comprises natural philosophy, "doctrinal" philosophy, and "divine" philosophy. The *quadrivium* is now classified as "doctrinal," but whether natural philosophy deals with *res naturales* is unclear, for Isidore defines speculative philosophy as a whole as exclusively concerning invisible, incorporeal, divine, and heavenly things.[24] At the same time, he declares that "natural philosophy" deals with "the nature (*natura*) of each individual thing", that is "those properties according to which the Creator defined it, unless perhaps by the will of God some miracle is shown to occur."[25]

Isidore clearly was not concerned with imposing a unitary structure on *scientia*, or defining *res naturales* in only one way. His views become more legible if we read them through the lens of the genres or expository registers in which he wrote about science. These are three: the mathematical disciplines of the *quadrivium* (*Etymologies* 3); the macrocosmic world-system (cosmology, meteorology, geography: *On the Nature of Things* and *Etymologies* 13–14); and the inventory of nature (humans, animals, plants, minerals: *Etymologies* 11–12, 16–17). What "science" and "nature" are depends on the register.

In his first dedicatory letter to King Sisebut, Isidore referred to the *Etymologies* as "the work concerning the origin of certain things (*opus de origine quarundam rerum*)".[26] The phrase finds an interesting counterpart in the preface—also addressed to Sisebut—of *On the Nature of Things*, where Isidore claims to be responding to the king's request for instruction "concerning the nature and causes of things (*ex rerum natura uel causis*)."[27] Nature, origin, and cause are closely aligned concepts in Isidore's thinking. Both *causa* and *origo* are synonyms for "etymology,"[28] and Isidore relished the ambiguity: in the opening

23 Isidore, *Etymologiae* 1.1.1, trans. Barney *et al.*, 39. Isidore's source is Cassiodorus, *Institutiones* 2.20; cf. Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* 6.3.1139b and 6.4.1140b; in practice, however, Isidore considers all the liberal arts as *disciplinae* and tends to use the terms interchangeably: Ribémont, *Les origines*, 94–95.

24 Isidore, *Etymologiae* 3.24.10–11; cf. Ribémont, *Les origines*, 91.

25 Isidore, *Etymologiae* 3.24.12, trans. Barney *et al.*, 80.

26 Isidore, *Epistola* 6, ed. Lindsay, *Isidori Hispalensis*, l. 20–21; Fontaine *Isidore culture*, 11, n. 1.

27 Isidore, *De natura rerum* ed. Fontaine, p. 167, line 3.

28 *Causa*: *Etymologiae* 13, *argumentum*: "so that the reader may go through them in a short time, and through this succinct brevity comes to know their etymologies and causes (*ety-*

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section of *Etymologies* book 12, he observes that Adam gave the animals their original names "according to their natural situation (*iuxta condicionem naturae cui serviret*)," thereby extending and completing God's work of creation.[29] In "inventory register" Isidore works from the premise that *origo* in the sense of creation is the *causa* or the reason why things happen as they do. The only passage in *Etymologies* where *natura* is explicitly defined is the beginning of book 11, on human beings, and there it is glossed as that which has the capacity of "engendering and creating." Some people, Isidore says, equate nature with God, because he creates everything.[30] Later in the same book, Isidore dismisses the idea that abnormal bodies are "unnatural," because giants, pygmies, and even monsters are all "created by divine will, since the nature of everything is the will of the Creator". Thus, prodigies are "not created contrary to nature, but contrary to what is known [about] nature."[31] These are also, of course, products of generation, even if they are anomalous.

In *On the Nature of Things*, however, where Isidore again reflects on anomalies, the relationship of "nature" and "cause" is construed in a different way. The storms and earthquakes of *On the Nature of Things* are "natural" because they are the results of physical processes which can be understood and explained. These processes are their "cause"; God of course created them, but unlike the monsters of *Etymologies*, the unpredictable lightning strikes or volcanic eruptions of *On the Nature of Things* are not construed as direct acts of divine will. This is true even in cases of pestilence (Ch. 39); Isidore concedes that human sin might contribute a *moral* cause, but this just sets in train the *natural* cause, which is corruption of the air by heat or excess moisture.[32] In Chapter 40, various theories of tides are aired, but Isidore declares the question unresolvable in our present state of knowledge: which theory is correct "God alone knows,

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mologias eorum causasque)" (trans. Barney *et al.*, 270; ed. Gasparotto, 4). *Origo*: *Etymologies* 1.29.1: "Etymology is the origin (*origo*) of words" (trans. Barney *et al.*, 54).

29 Isidore, *Etymologiae* 12.1.

30 Isidore, *Etymologiae* 11.1, trans. Barney *et al.*, 231.

31 Isidore, *Etymologiae* 11.3.1–2, trans. Barney *et al.*, 243. Isidore is quoting Augustine, *De civitate Dei* 21.8. Isidore's views on the "naturally unnatural" are judged to be more negative by Mary Beagon, "Variations on a Theme. Isidore and Pliny on Human and Human-Instigated Anomaly," in *Isidore of Seville and his Reception in the Early Middle Ages: Transmitting and Transforming Knowledge*, eds. Andrew Fear and Jamie Wood (Amsterdam, 2016), 57–72. Her analysis is pertinent to anomalous humans and animals (see note 99 below), but less so to inanimate phenomena, such as earthquakes.

32 Isidore, *De natura rerum*, ed. Fontaine, 303.4–8: "Quae sit uero causa huius pestilentiae quidam dixerunt: quando pro peccatis hominum plaga et correptio terris inicitur, tunc aliqua ex causa, id est aut siccitas aut caloris ui aut pluuiatum intemperantia, aera corrumpuntur."

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whose work the world is, and the entire plan of the world is known only to him."[33] But the implication is that there is, in fact, a correct theory, even if it is not known.

In sum, when Isidore is working within the "world-system" tradition of *On the Nature of Things*, he implicitly thinks of "nature" as a process that issues in a result. In the "inventory of nature" sections of the *Etymologies*, "natures" are the properties of species, implanted at creation. Indeed, Isidore distinguishes etymologies derived from (purposeful) *causa* (kings or *reges* take their name from *recte agendo*, "acting justly") and etymologies derived from (generative) *origo* (e.g. "human" from *humus*, or earth).[34] These complementary dimensions of nature constitute his field of scientific knowledge and reflection.

3 *On the Nature of Things*: The System of the World Revisioned

Though Isidore wrote in the "world-system" register in both *On the Nature of Things* (composed 612–13) and *Etymologies* (begun 615), the earlier book is not merely a fragment of, or a rehearsal for, the later one.[35] While it deploys etymologies, *On the Nature of Things* is not structured by them, but instead around expositions, explanations (sometimes diverse), and occasionally arguments. One has only to compare the extended discussion of the mechanism of lunar and solar eclipses in *On the Nature of Things* chapters 20–21 with the exceedingly compressed account in *Etymologies* 3.57–58. Moreover, unlike *Etymologies*, *On the Nature of Things* includes illustrative schemata.[36] Finally, it is an *oeuvre de circonstance*, composed apparently in some haste at the request of

33 Isidore, *De natura rerum*, ed. Fontaine, 307.17–18: "… hoc soli Deo cognitum est cuius et opus mundus est solique omnis mundi ratio nota est."

34 Isidore, *Etymologiae* 1.29.3, trans. Barney *et al.*, 55.

35 This is the view of Ribémont, *Les origines*, pt. 2, ch.1, esp. 239.

36 These famous *figurae* – many of them circular (hence the medieval title *Liber rotarum*), mark an important stage in the history of the graphic presentation of scientific information, and merit a longer discussion than can be afforded here. Important analyses include: Michael Gorman, "The Diagrams in the Oldest Manuscripts of Isidore's 'De natura rerum' with A Note on the Manuscript Traditions of Isidore's Works," *Studi Medievali* 42 (2001), 529–45; Bruce S. Eastwood, "The Diagram of the Four Elements in the oldest Manuscripts of Isidore's 'De natura rerum,'" *Studi Medievali* 42 (2001), 549–64; Faith Wallis, "What a Medieval Diagram Shows: a Case Study of Computus," *Studies in Iconography* 35 (2015), 1–40; and Barbara Obrist, "Le diagramme isidorien des saisons: Son contenu physique et les représentations figuratives," *Mélange de l'École française de Rome: Moyen Âge* 108 (1996), 95–164; Barbara Obrist, "Wind Diagrams and Medieval Cosmology," *Speculum* 72 (1997), 33–84; Barbara Obrist, *La cosmologie médiévale: textes et images.* Vol. 1: *Les fondements antiques* (Florence: 2004), esp. 273–83.

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Isidore's sovereign, King Sisebut; the *Etymologies* was initiated by Isidore himself and was the product of decades of slow accumulation.[37]

Isidore's preface frames *On the Nature of Things* as a response to a royal command for information about "certain matters concerning the nature and causes of things." The hypothesis that this commission was related to an unusual series of lunar and solar eclipses in 611–12 is intriguing, but the inference that Isidore composed the work to allay "popular" panic at these phenomena fails to find support in the text itself.[38] To the contrary: Isidore refutes the charge that it is knowledge of "the nature of these things" *itself* that is superstitious (*superstitiosa*). This is not so, he says; provided that this knowledge accords with teaching (*doctrina*) that is sound (*sana*) and sensible (*sobria*), it is not superstitious. In classical Latin, *superstitio* denotes irrational credulity, or excessive dread of the gods or of omens. However, the term was redefined by Christian writers of the Patristic age to denote pagan beliefs in the very existence of the gods and *daimones*.[39] Hence when Isidore says that his science is not *superstitiosa* he may be defending his discussion of the names of the constellations (Ch. 26.1), or the days of the week (Ch. 3.4) from any charge of approving pagan mythology. Indeed, Isidore is less concerned with popular hysteria than with astrology. He distinguishes astronomy from astrology in the *Etymologies*: *astronomia* is the science of "the turning of the heavens, the rising, setting and motion of heavenly bodies, as well as the reason behind their names," and is without qualification legitimate; *astrologia* is a matter of fact (*naturalis*) when it measures the course of the sun and moon and planets, but *superstitiosa* when practiced by astrologers (*mathematici*) who divine which zodiac sign rules which part of the human body or mind, or presume to cast horoscopes.[40] Lurking in the back of Isidore's concerns with astrology may also

37 The role of Braulio in the genesis of the *Etymologiae* is discussed by Graham Barrett in this present volume.

38 Fontaine, ed., *Isidore de Séville: Traité*, 3–6 (eclipses of 611–12) and 13 (evidence of hasty composition); Fontaine's views are endorsed by Stephen C. McCluskey, "Natural Knowledge in the Early Middle Ages," in *The Cambridge History of Science*, vol. 2: *Medieval Science*, eds David C. Lindberg and Michael Shank (Cambridge: 2013), 288.

39 Dale B. Martin, *Inventing Superstition: from the Hippocratics to the Christians* (Cambridge, MA: 2004).

40 Isidore, *Etymologies* 3.27(26).1–2, trans. Barney *et al.*, 99 (modified). On the sources and impact of this distinction, see Max Lejbowicz, "Les antécédants de la distinction isidorienne: *astrologia/astronomia*," in *Observer, lire, écrire le ciel au moyen âge: actes du colloque d'Orléans 22–23 avril 1989,* ed. Bernard Ribémont. (Paris: 1990), 173–212, and Max Lejbowicz, "Posterité médiévale de la distinction isidorienne *astrologia/astronomia*: Bède et le vocabulaire de la chronométrie," in *Documents pour l'histoire du vocabulaire scientifique* 7 (Paris: 1985), 1–41.

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be the heresy of Priscillian, bishop of Avila (d. 385), who embraced astral determinism and a belief that the heavenly bodies were agents in the cosmic war of good against evil.[41]

In defending himself against charges of "superstition" (i.e. paganism), Isidore may also be answering a trend in 6th-century Christian thought that amplified the opposition between classical Greco-Roman cosmology and the biblical picture of the world, associated particularly with the work of Cosmas Indicopleustes. But what ultimately justifies the study of the subjects covered in *On the Nature of Things* is its origin in a royal command. As a king, Sisebut can lay claim to the model of Solomonic wisdom represented in Isidore's quotation from Wisdom 7:17–19. This model encompasses the cosmos: "the disposition of the heavens, and the virtues of the elements, … the alterations of their courses, and the changes of seasons, the revolutions of the years, and disposition of the stars."[42] Oddly, given that *On the Nature of Things* includes a section on the divisions of time, Isidore omits from the quotation "the beginning and ending and midst of the times," probably because his treatise does not deal with history.[43] He also does not extend the catalogue of Solomonic wisdom to verse 20: "the natures of living creatures and rage of wild beasts, the force of winds and reasonings of men, the diversities of plants and the virtues of roots." These topics lie outside the "world-system" and belong with the "inventory of nature" that will feature in the *Etymologies*.

In the first chapter of *On the Nature of Things*, Isidore establishes a pattern which he will follow throughout the hemerological section of his book (Chs 1–8) by underscoring the relationship between time-reckoning and cosmology. A day is both a uniform unit of time-measurement and an event in the natural world—"the presence of the sun between its rising and setting"—for in the Genesis narrative, three days (in the sense of units of time) unfold before the

41 Henry Chadwick, *Priscillian of Avila: the Occult and the Charismatic in the Early Church* (Oxford: 1976), 82–83, 231–32. Jacques Fontaine, "Isidore de Séville et l'astrologie," *Revue des études latines* 31 (1953), 271–300, rejects the argument of M.L.W. Laistner, "The Western Church and Astrology during the Early Middle Ages," *Harvard Theological Review* 34 (1941), esp. 264–68, that Isidore had little awareness of judicial astrology.

42 Isidore, *De natura rerum*, ed. Fontaine, 167, lines 6–10. It has been argued that Isidore intended to put Augustine's program of Christian learning into action: Bruce S. Eastwood, "Early Medieval Cosmology, Astronomy and Mathematics," in *The Cambridge History of Science,* vol. 2: *Medieval Science*, eds. David C. Lindberg and Michael H. Shank (Cambridge: 2013), 306. However, there is little evidence of inspiration from Augustine's *De doctrina christiana*.

43 See the chapter by Jamie Wood in this volume for Isidore as an historian.

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sun makes the first natural day on the fourth day of creation.[44] Night (Ch. 2) is only a cosmological phenomenon – the absence of sunlight between sunset and sunrise—for as time, it is included within the day. The months are also treated both as divisions of time and in terms of the increase and decrease of daylight across the year (Ch. 5).

Isidore defines the year (Ch. 6) etymologically as a complete circuit (*annus* = *anus*, or ring), symbolizing the totality of human life, or even eternity itself. He will not extend himself to longer epochs or ages (as he will in *Etymologies* book 5); instead, and in keeping with his book's focus on the system of the world, he reverses direction to analyse the year in terms of its natural seasons (Ch. 7) and its astronomical divisions by the solstices and equinoxes (Ch. 8).

In Chapter 9 (*De mundo*), Isidore switches his perspective to the material universe. *Mundus* for Isidore can mean either "cosmos" or "earth." This ambiguity extends to the two ways of dividing the *mundus*: the five circles of Chapter 10 (at once celestial circles and terrestrial climates), and the "parts of the world (*de partibus mundi*)" of Chapter 11, which are the four elements that govern physics below the orbit of the Moon. From Chapter 12 ("Heaven and its name") onwards, Isidore's text tracks the vertical order of the cosmos from the heavens down to the bowels of the earth. First he describes the "parts" of the celestial architecture, like the vault (*cohus*) or visible dome that seems to sit over the earth like an inverted silver bowl engraved with stars, and the axis that joins the poles. Then he sets this machinery in motion, the whole sphere turning on its axis once a day, from east to west. The sphericity of the universe justifies the biblical "waters above the firmament," which prevent the buildup of excess heat under the revolving orb (a Stoic concept).[45] The ultimate reason for the emphasis on the sphere, however, becomes evident in Chapter 12.5: the spherical shape of the universe is proof of the rational mind of its Creator, and even pagans like Plato acknowledge this. The universe's circular motion is rationality and intelligence itself, in contrast to the linear motions of forward, back, right and left, up and down.[46]

Chapters 13–21 on the planets form a tightly structured block, culminating in two chapters on eclipses, and reinforcing the themes of divine rationality and providential care. In Chapter 14 he deals directly with the one element of

44 Fontaine, ed., *Isidore de Séville: Traité*, 7, n. 2; Marek Hermann, "Zwischen heidnischer und christlicher Kosmologie: Isidore von Sevilla und seine Weltanschauung," *Analecta Cracoviensia* 32 (2004), 317.

45 Fontaine, *Isidore culture*, 478–79.

46 Isidore, *De natura rerum*, ed. Fontaine, 221. On the importance of this theme for Isidore, and his dependence on commentaries on the *Timaeus* 34A and 43B for the arguments which follow, see Fontaine, *Isidore culture*, 476–78.

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Christian cosmology that defied rationalization in terms of ancient physics, namely the waters above the firmament of Genesis 1:7. Isidore's argument is an interesting illustration of how he mined his science from his Patristic sources as well as from his classical reading, and shaped scientific problems in his own way.

For many Church Fathers, the "waters above the firmament" represented a point on which Scripture and pagan science could not be reconciled, and on which the superior authority of revelation must prevail. Origen attempted to resolve the problem of how water could rest on top of the fiery lower heavens, in defiance of the physics of the elements, by interpreting the waters as an allegory. This provoked a strenuous response from Basil of Caesarea in his *Hexaemeron,* the model and source of Ambrose's *Hexaemeron*: the waters had to be physical waters, and no scientific explanation of their existence was required. Augustine offered a more tentative defence of the reality of the supercelestial waters in *The Literal Interpretation of Genesis*. Though Isidore knew both these works, he chose here to follow Ambrose.[47] Ambrose dismisses the objections of philosophers who complain that the liquid waters would run down the sides of the sphere of the universe: "the one who could create everything from nothing could also stabilize the nature of the waters in heaven." But Isidore expanded Ambrose by adding after "the nature of the waters" the phrase "with the solidity of ice" (*glaciali soliditate*), which he lifted from Augustine's *The Literal Interpretation of Genesis* 2.5.[48] Augustine is presenting a hypothetical argument against the philosophers: if (as some pagans believe) Saturn, the planet closest to the outermost zone of heaven, is by nature cold, then there must be water in its vicinity, congealed into ice. The irony is that Augustine thinks this a rather foolish argument; Isidore, however, takes it at face value as celestial physics. This almost accidental hypothesis about the frozen nature of the supercelestial waters was destined to have a long career in Christian treatments of cosmology.[49]

Chapters 15–21 concern the motion and relative size of the Sun and Moon, and lead up to the explanation of solar and lunar eclipses. King Sisebut responded to *On the Nature of Things* by composing a poem on eclipses[50] that may have been intended to supplement or even correct Isidore's work. Among other things, it explains why eclipses do not occur every month, something

47 Thomas O'Loughlin, "*Aquae super caelos* (Gen 1:6–7): The First Faith-Science Debate?," *Milltown Studies* 29 (1992), 92–114; Fontaine, *Isidore culture*, 548.

48 Isidore, *De natura rerum*, ed. Fontaine, 227, lines 10–12.

49 Thomas O'Loughlin, "The Waters above the Heavens: Isidore and the Latin Tradition," *Milltown Studies* 36 (1995), 104–17.

50 Isidore, *De natura rerum*, ed. and trans. Fontaine, 328–35.

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which Isidore omits. Moreover, Sisebut explicitly chastises "superstition," which Isidore does not. Instead, and rather surprisingly, Isidore offers both conventional and alternative explanations of eclipses, and some of the latter might even encourage irrational fear. In the case of the solar eclipse, "philosophers and wise men of this world" argue that the hole (*foramen*) in the atmosphere through which the Sun's light passes can be blocked by "some exhalation" (*aliquo spiritu*).[51] The "exhalation" hints at atmospheric corruption, like pestilence (see Ch. 39), and even suggests some arbitrary or malevolent force. If one compares this chapter with Chapter 21 on the eclipse of the Moon the same pattern emerges: an explanation based on celestial mechanics is followed by one ascribed to the Stoics that suggests that a lunar eclipse is a shadow cast by mountains on the periphery of the earth.[52] Why is Isidore offering an alternative explanation at all?

The answer lies in the spiritual interpretations that close both chapters 20 and 21. In Chapter 21, Isidore compares Christ's death and resurrection to the eclipse and re-emergence of the Sun. In so doing, he explains that the eclipse that took place at the Crucifixion was "unnatural," though he does state why, namely that Christ was executed at Passover, when the Moon would have been full. Instead, Isidore interprets the darkness that covered the earth as the "sacrilegious conspiracy" of the Jews against Jesus[53]—a sort of spiritual corruption or pestilence which infected the elements. Likewise, in Chapter 21, lunar eclipses are likened to persecutions inflicted on the Church, whose earthly enemies might be imagined as hedging her around like mountains. This suggests that the less predictable and mechanistic explanations for eclipses were invoked by Isidore in order to do some particular exegetical work in relation to

51 Isidore, *De natura rerum*, ed. Fontaine, 249, lines 17–19. Though cited as a parallel by Fontaine, Aetius (i.e. Pseudo-Plutarch, *Placita philosophorum* 2.24) mentions no *formamen*, but rather a condensation of clouds obscuring the Sun. Fontaine, *Isidore culture*, 497 suggests that the theory is a misreading of a model propounded by Anaximander, and transmitted through a doxographical compendium. Anaximander's view was that the Sun is obscured by thick clouds, from which its light emerged by a narrow orifice.

52 Fontaine, *Isidore culture*, 500, argues that the mountain theory derives from a gloss on Lucan, whom Isidore somewhat inappropriately quotes, but he provides no evidence. Curiously, the mountain model bears some resemblance to Cosmas Indicopleustes's explanation for *night*, namely that the Sun disappears behind a huge mountain in the centre of the (flat) earth: Jeffrey C. Anderson, "Description of the Miniatures and Commentary," in *The Christian Topography of Kosmas Indikopleustes* (*Firenze, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, plut. 9.28*)*: The Map of the Universe Redrawn in the Sixth Century, with a Contribution on the Slavic Recensions*, ed. Jeffrey C. Anderson (Rome: 2013), 42–44.

53 Isidore, *De natura rerum*, ed. Fontaine, 249–50; cf. Fontaine, *Isidore culture*, 556–57.

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his allegories. For Sisebut, on the other hand, this was not the unequivocally rational explanation for which he was looking.

Chapters 22–27 constitute a block on the "stars" (*stellae*, *sidera*), by which Isidore denoted either the fixed stars or the planets or both. This ambiguous terminology generates some confusion, because Isidore shifts from discussing stars or constellations to discussing planets without warning, notably when describing their motion in Chapter 22.[54] Chapter 23 on the planets also contains puzzles: his names for the planets are eccentric (e.g. Mars is "Vesper," which normally denotes Venus) and quite different from those in *Etymologies* 3.71, and his figures for the length of each planet's circuit through the zodiac are peculiar: the Moon is said to take 8 years, Mercury 20 years, Venus 9 years, the Sun 19 years, and Mars 15 years. Only Jupiter and Saturn are correctly stated to have periods of 12 and 30 years, respectively. The subject of Chapter 24 is the source of starlight, and Isidore provides the answer in the first sentence: the stars shine with reflected light from the Sun. The remainder of the chapter exposes Isidore's real concern, namely to refute the idea that the stars can fall. Their reflected light may be drowned out by the radiance of daylight, but they merely appear to vanish, as is evident during a solar eclipse, when they are temporarily visible. In Chapter 25 he adds that falling stars are optical illusions—just fragments of celestial fire that rain down from the ether and are blown about by the winds.

Isidore frames his discussion of the names of the constellations (Ch. 26) with considerable caution. Job 38:31–32 indeed refers to the constellations by pagan mythological names, but this just proves that they are nothing more than conventional labels, like the planetary names of the weekdays. While constellation legends are part of late antique astronomical tradition (notably in Hyginus), and also reflect Isidore's dependence on literary scholia, it is nonetheless worth remarking that he did not have to include this information at all. To be sure, most of the star names in this chapter are the ones found in the passage from Job, which gives the chapter the air of an exegetical aid. But if this catalogue of star names was supposed to aid the reader of Scripture, it exceeded its mandate, for it includes Boötes and Sirius, which are not in the Bible. Neither Sirius nor comets (Ch. 26.15) are given allegorical meanings, and Isidore's motivation for including them is obscure. Sirius, it can be argued, fits into Isidore's strategy of replacing mythological origins with explanations focussed on astro-meteorology:[55] as the Pleiades and Orion delimit the summer and winter seasons, so does Sirius mark the height of summer heat. But Sirius

54 Fontaine, *Isidore culture*, 507–09.

55 Fontaine, *Isidore culture*, 526–27.

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shares with the comet an implied malevolence, because it "burns." Isidore's reader is thus nudged towards the problem of whether stars have souls (Ch. 27).

Given Isidore's views on astral worship and astrology, it is disconcerting to find him entertaining this question, and in such an inconclusive way. Yet his agnostic stance is precisely that of his source, Augustine's *The Literal Interpretation of Genesis*. Augustine's reserve reflects a vigorous Patristic controversy on this topic. Origen endorsed the Platonic idea that the stars were animated beings, and Jerome in his commentary on Ecclesiastes seems to back him up; Basil and others argued that the stars were not alive, but were corporeal bodies propelled by intelligent spiritual beings. Isidore lays out both these possibilities but adds a third scenario proposed by Augustine, namely that the stars are purely material entities.[56] Isidore is not impressed by the materialist option, but if stars have souls, what will become of them at the resurrection? Isidore does not answer this question, or even explain its implications. Was he in contact with Jewish circles in Spain who held that the stars were angels whose judgement was reserved to the end of time?[57] Or is his question a distant echo of the controversy surrounding Origen's speculations that our bodies after the resurrection will be similar in some way to the bodies of the stars?[58]

The remainder of *On the Nature of Things* is devoted to meteorology in the Aristotelian sense: atmospheric conditions, the behaviour of waters, earthquakes, and volcanoes. Isidore's focus on the stars as indicators of seasonal weather conditions prepares the reader for this transition and bridges the time-reckoning of the opening chapters to the terrestrial phenomena with which the book closes. The exposition follows the vertical hierarchy of air (Chs 29–39), water (Chs 40–44), and earth (Chs 45–48). Within the airy zone, Isidore chooses to start with phenomena which have traditionally provoked scientific curiosity and debate, but also fear and "superstition": thunder (Ch. 29), lightning (Ch. 30), and the rainbow (Ch. 31). This is followed by explanations of more commonplace weather conditions: clouds (Ch. 32), rain (Ch. 33), snow (Ch. 34), and hail (Ch. 35). The explanation of hail shows how Isidore could go beyond his sources by explaining not only its formation (which Aristotle covered in *Meterologica* 1.11.347b28) but its fall, and its spherical shape. No single source can account for all of his information. Isidore states that the round shape of hail is due to the warmth of the Sun, plus the slow descent of the hail through the atmosphere. Seneca (*Natural Questions* 4B.3) also invokes a

56 Fontaine, "Isidore de Séville et l'astrologie," 284–85.

57 Fontaine, "Isidore de Séville et l'astrologie," 295.

58 Alan Scott, *Origen and the Life of the Stars: a History of an Idea* (Oxford: 1991), Ch. 9.

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prolonged fall but does not mention the Sun, and he thinks that hail is round because water droplets are globular.[59]

Linking the atmosphere to the heavens above and the solid earth beneath are the winds (Chs 36–37), and Chapter 38 on "Signs of Storms or Fair Weather" follows logically on the winds. Extrapolation of weather predictions from prevailing winds as well as the rising and setting of prominent constellations lies in the deepest substrate of ancient observation about the physical world and forms the foundation of classical meteorology.[60] To these were added the appearance of the sky itself, as well as the behaviour of animals. When it comes to the aspect and colour of the Sun and Moon, Isidore claims as his authority Publius Nigidius Figulus (d. 45 B.C.), whom Jerome in his *Chronicon* called a Pythagorean and a *magus* because of his interest in divination. However, Isidore disinfects his source by explaining that changes to these planets are the consequence of thickening air, and hence a natural result of atmospheric conditions; and for good measure he quotes Christ's words in Luke 12.55: "If in the evening the sky is red, in the morning it will be fair weather. If in the morning the gloomy sky is red, there will be a storm." Weather prognostication, somewhat like medical prognosis, was treated in antiquity as an inference from natural signs, and not as a form of divination; this probably contributed to its easy adoption by Christians, and Isidore's casual juxtaposition of Nigidius with Christ speaks to this hospitable attitude.[61] Nonetheless, Bede dropped this chapter of *On the Nature of Things* from his own book of the same title, and he sharply attacked Isidore's notion that the angle of the horns of the Moon can presage weather in Chapter 25 of *The Reckoning of Time*.[62]

Given the role of pestilence in the Bible as God's signature punishment for sin, as well as its association with guilty "pollution" in ancient Greek literature, it is interesting that Isidore concentrates on the Hippocratic model of pestilence as natural epidemic disease, caused by averse atmospheric conditions. Pestilence "strikes" (a term that carries a valence of punishment) "because of mankind's sins," but Isidore merely ascribes this view to "some people." Properly, it is "from some [natural] cause," namely the corruption of the atmosphere through an excess of one of the four elemental qualities of heat, cold, moisture, and dryness. The air envelops the whole earth, the corruption is borne on the winds, and everything that comes into contact ("contagion") with it is

59 Fontaine, *Isidore culture*, 552.

60 Taub, *Ancient Meteorology*, Ch. 1; Daryn Lehoux, *Astronomy, Weather, and Calendars in the Ancient World* (Cambridge: 2007).

61 Fontaine, *Isidore de Séville. Genèse*, 338–39.

62 See Faith Wallis, *Bede: The Reckoning of Time*, revised ed. (Liverpool: 2004), 301–04.

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"infected" or tainted. *Pestilentia* is primarily a problem with the air itself, and not the humans who were made sick by it.[63] Isidore also records the view of "others" that wind-borne "plague-bearing seeds (*semina*)" cause pestilence; his source here is Lucretius' *De rerum natura* 6.1090–132, who argues that plague is just exposure to an unfamiliar ailment that is endemic in some other part of the world.

In chapters 40–44, Isidore moves into the element of water, first to explain tides (Ch. 40) and then to answer questions about why the sea does not increase in size (Ch. 41) and why its waters are bitter (Ch. 42), with multiple hypotheses and models. The anomalous flooding of the Nile in summer (Ch. 43) had been an object of speculation for many ancient savants, and Isidore here opts for Lucretius' theory (*De natura rerum* 6.712–37) that it is the consequence of the contrary force of the Etesian winds from the north.

On the Nature of Things closes with the earth but remains within the conceptual world of meteorology. Chapter 45 unravels another scientific problem: the heavy spherical earth is surrounded on all sides by an envelope of lighter air, so how does it remain stable? Ambrose's answer is that the Creator "suspended the earth in the void (*in nihilo*)" so that it hangs in space. Isidore prefers to align Ambrose with "the philosophers" (e.g. Pliny, *Natural History* 2.4.10) who argue that the earth floats on a mass of thick air. In the end, Isidore concludes that both models are equally reasonable, and equally unprovable. This is the second time that he invokes the mystery of God's creative plan to bring closure to an argument, the other being the discussion of the tides in Chapter 40. Alternative explanations are also on offer for earthquakes (Ch. 46)—winds gusting through subterranean caverns, collapsing underground caves, and buried rivers—but Isidore this time declares a preference for the wind theory that Lucretius (6.577–84) borrowed from Aristotle. While Isidore turned to a work of history for his information on Mount Etna (Ch. 47)—Justinus's *Epitome* of Pompeius Trogus—his account accords with the model prevalent in scientific accounts. Winds, once again, are the principal cause.[64]

The final chapter of *On the Nature of Things* presents two pictures of Earth. The first depicts the planet in the centre of the universe, while the second represents the inhabited lands, as these were known to the ancients. Isidore

63 Cf. Isidore, *De differentiis 1* 143: "*Pestis* is the name of a disease, but *pestilentia* is what produces it from itself. There are three modes of *pestilentia*: from earth, from water, and from air." ("Inter pestem et pestilentiam. Pestis ipsum nomen est morbi, pestilentia uero id quod ex se efficit. Pestilentiae autem tres modi sunt: aut ex terra, aut ex aqua, aut ex aere.")

64 Liba Taub, *Aetna and the Moon: Explaining Nature in Ancient Greece and Rome* (Corvallis: 2008), 45–55, esp. 49.

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likewise visualizes the *oekumene* in two different ways. From Hyginus he derives a mental map of three continents separated by conspicuous bodies of water; from Augustine, he borrows the more abstract concept of the continents occupying sectors defined by the cardinal directions. Finally, he cites Ambrose's geometrical formula: Asia occupies half the world, Europe and Africa the other half. Manuscripts of *On the Nature of Things* are the oldest witnesses to a form of stylized map that encompasses all three of these approaches: the so-called T-O map of the inhabited lands of Earth. This "map" is in fact a diagram or schema that represents the land mass of the known world as a disk (the O) divided horizontally, and with its lower half bisected vertically (the T). Whether Isidore devised, or even knew of, such a map is the subject of debate, but there is no controversy over the role of *On the Nature of Things* in its exceptional medieval diffusion and influence.[65]

3.1 Etymologies (*1*): *The* disciplinae

Something important about Isidore's project in the *Etymologies* would be lost if we simply plucked the information we thought pertinent to science without paying attention to the larger structure of the work. The first ten books march beneath the banner of *disciplina*, which is also the first word of book 1. *Disciplinae* are first and foremost the liberal arts: the *trivium* of grammar, rhetoric, and logic, and the *quadrivium* of the mathematical sciences.[66] While the *quadrivium* is our focus here, it is important to remember that Isidore saw the whole ensemble of the arts as a program that prepared the mind to rise to "contemplation of what is above."[67] Taking his cue from Varro, Isidore added two learned professions—medicine and law—to the arts. Medicine comes within the purview of science both for its object and its methods, but law, it will be recalled, is the arena in which Isidore chooses to discuss time-reckoning. For the Christian, "what is above" is revelation, the true philosophy revealed by God, his angels and saints, and the Scriptures and the Church (books 6–8). This

65 On the negative side, Patrick Gautier Dalché, "De la glose à la contemplation. Place et fonction de la carte dans les manuscrits du haut moyen âge," in *Testo e immagine nell'alto medioevo,* Settimane di studi del Centro italiano di studi sull'alto medioevo 41 (Spoleto: 1994), 707; in favour, David Woodward, "Medieval *Mappaemundi,*" in *The History of Cartography. Volume One: Cartography in Prehistoric, Ancient and Medieval Europe and the Mediterranean*, eds. J.B. Harley and David Woodward (Chicago: 1987), 301–02. See also Wesley Stevens, "The Figure of the Earth in Isidore's *De natura rerum*," *Isis* 71 (1980), 268–77.

66 See the chapter by José Carracedo Fraga in this volume.

67 *Etymologiae* 3.71(70).41, trans. Barney *et al.*, 107.

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first half of the *Etymologies*, which begins with grammar, ends with languages (book 9) and an alphabetical dictionary (book 10).

The second group of ten books opens with the word *natura* at the head of the book devoted to human psychology and the human body. Book 11 ends in a discussion of monstrous births, which bridges to book 12, on animals. At this point, Isidore turns to the "system of the world" outlined in *On the Nature of Things*, beginning with the heavens, atmosphere, and waters (book 13), and surveying the geography of Earth (book 14). We will not be following him into the human-built environment (cities, farms, and roads) of book 15, but will reconnect with his "inventory of nature" in book 16 (metals and stones) and book 17 (crops, vines, trees, and herbs). Indeed, Isidore considers the vegetable kingdom under the rubric of agriculture, and book 17 opens a suite of books on other crafts and their gear.

We will first consider Isidore's treatment of the mathematical disciplines in book 3 and medicine in book 4; and then, in defiance of his own order, we will examine the "inventory of nature" before revisiting the "system of the world." While acknowledging the significance, subtlety, and originality of Isidore's etymological method,[68] we will (following the example of his medieval readers) concentrate on the information he conveys.[69] Nonetheless, the method and the content cannot be disentangled, because unlike *On the Nature of Things*, the *Etymologies* is not committed to providing explanations or answers to questions; its mandate is to define what things are, based on their names.

68 Key studies include Mark Amsler, *Etymology and Grammatical Discourse in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages* (Amsterdam: 1989), Ch. 3; Jacques Fontaine, "Cohérence et originalité de l'etymologie isidorienne," *Homanaje a Eleuterio Elorduy S.J.* (Bilbao: 1978), 133–44; Ribémont, *Les origines*, pt. 1, Ch. 2; and most recently, the unusual but thought-provoking analysis of John Henderson, *The Medieval World of Isidore of Seville: Truth from Words* (Cambridge: 2007). Merrills, "Isidore's *Etymologies*," 311–13 argues that Henderson overstates the coherence of the etymological method, and points out that it is not, in fact, sustained throughout *Etymologies*. Etymology would remain a privileged medieval mode of *presenting* information, but would not again be used as the ordering principle of an encyclopedia (Ribémont, *Les origines*, 85). See also the chapter by Jacques Elfassi in the present volume.

69 Isidore's etymological method was directly relevant in certain contexts, for example the debate of signs and images in the *Liber Caroli* discussed by Laura Carlson, "Adoption, Adaptation, and Authority: the Use of Isidore in the *Opus Caroli*," in *Isidore of Seville and his Reception*, eds. Fear and Wood, 210–30. On the other hand, readers of the *Etymologies*' scientific sections tended to excerpt the information without the etymologies. Early Irish references to Isidore's computistics and anatomical terminology are cases in point: Marina Smyth, "Isidorian Texts in Seventh-Century Ireland," in *Isidore of Seville and his Reception*, eds. Fear and Wood, 119 and 121.

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Isidore's etymological method had a strong impact on the mathematical disciplines of book 3.[70] Although his argument promises to investigate the principles (*causae*) of the four sciences, he passes over arithmetical operations, geometrical theorems, and astronomical models, concentrating instead on expounding terminology and classificatory schemes. The section on arithmetic, for example (3.1–9), is about the properties of numbers—odd and even, prime and compound, "superfluous," "diminutive," and "perfect" (i.e. the sum of their factors) (3.5); superpartient and superparticular and their minor homologues (3.6); and discrete, continuous, linear, planar, and solid (3.7). In the midst of this catalogue, however, Isidore inserts a remarkable encomium of arithmetic's sacred and secular worth:

> The theory (*ratio*) of numbers ought not to be despised, for in many passages of sacred writings it elucidates how great a mystery they hold. Not for nothing is it said in praise of God (Wisdom 11:21), "Thou has ordered all things in measure, and number, and weight." The [number] that contains six units (*senarius*), which is perfect in its own parts, declares the completion (*perfectionem*) of the world by a certain signification of its number. Likewise for the forty days during which Moses and Elijah and the Lord himself fasted: without an understanding of numbers, the span of days is unintelligible. So also there are other numbers in the Sacred Scriptures whose figurative meaning cannot be resolved except by those skilled in the knowledge of the mathematical art. It is even our lot to depend on the discipline of numbers to some extent when through it we name the hours, when we dispute about the course of the months, and when we recognize the duration of the turning year. Indeed, through numbers we are provided with the means to avoid confusion. Remove numbers from all things, and everything perishes. Remove computation (*conputum*) from the world, and blind ignorance embraces all things; those who are ignorant of the method of calculation cannot be differentiated from the other animals.[71]

This ode to number closely echoes the opening word of Isidore's *Book of Numbers* (*Liber numerorum*): "To pay attention to the principles [*causas*] underlying

70 For extended discussion of book 3, see Fontaine, *Isidore culture*, pts. 3–4; Ribémont, *Les origines*, 97–118; and the introduction to Gasparotto and Guillaumin's edition.

71 *Etymologies* 3.1.1–4, trans. Barney *et al.* 90 (modified).

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the numbers found in Scripture is not superfluous."[72] Like *On the Nature of Things* the *Book of Numbers* is a ground-breaking work: the first Christian handbook of number symbolism. Much of its material finds its way into *Etymologies* book 3. However, the *Etymologies* is not concerned with what numbers signify as much as with how they are signified by their names and classificatory affiliations.[73] It is also interesting to note that the quotation from Wisdom 11:21 appears again in book 17 of the *Etymologies* on stones and metals, where it opens the discussion of Roman units of weight and volumetric measures. The metaphysical measurement of mathematics is separate from the practical world of corporeal objects, "each … ruled by its own weight."[74]

Isidore's discussion of "infinite numbers" (3.9) is an interesting illustration of how he extracted scientific data from Patristic sources, leaving their theological arguments behind. Numbers are infinite, Isidore argues, because however large a number one can imagine, one can always add to it, or even multiply it an unlimited number of times. His source here is Augustine's *City of God* 12.19, but Isidore effaces Augustine's argument, which was to prove to skeptics that *God's knowledge* is infinite, because he has knowledge of all numbers, and numbers are infinite.[75] Significantly, the *Etymologies* situate the infinite number directly after a discussion of different kinds of ratio, in increasing order of complexity—arithmetical, geometrical, and harmonic—as if capping this progression.[76] Certainly the order of ratios was important to Isidore, as it inspired him to alter the received order of the disciplines of the *quadrivium*. Boethius and Cassiodorus both adopted an epistemological sequence—arithmetic deals with number per se, music with number in ratio, geometry with number extended in space, and astronomy with number in motion—while Martianus placed "Harmony" at the end of his series after astronomy, as it symbolizes the transcendent perfection of the heavenly realm. Isidore's *argumentum* or summary introduction to book 3 announces the Boethius-Cassiodorus order; but in the text, he follows his "ratio order."[77]

Isidore's definition of geometry is a creative mosaic of phrases from Augustine's *De ordine* and Cicero's *De oratore*: "The art of this discipline is concerned

72 *Liber numerorum*/*Le Livre des nombres*, ed. Jean-Ives Guillaumin (Paris: 2005), 5; my translation.

73 Ribémont, *Les origines*, 108–10.

74 *Etymologies* 16.25.1, trans. Barney *et al*., 332.

75 Bernard Ribémont, "Isidore de Séville et les mathématiques," *Discours et savoirs: encyclopédies médiévales*, ed. Bernard Baillaud, Jérôme de Gramont and Denis Hüe (Rennes: 1998): 33–35; Ribémont, *Les origines*, 110–11.

76 Ribémont, "Isidore et les mathématiques," 38–39:

77 Ribémont, *Les origines*, 101–07.

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with line, distances, sizes and shapes, and the dimensions and numbers found in shapes."[78] But his brief treatment of geometry contains no theorems or proofs; he seems unacquainted with Euclid, save for the division of geometry into planes, measurable magnitudes, rational magnitudes, and solids, which was channelled through Cassiodorus.[79] Indeed, Isidore is concerned exclusively with defining figures and shapes, and only gestures towards mathematics when he deals with geometric ratios (3.13).

The mutation of geometry into the literal "measuring the earth" (3.10.3) is echoed by Isidore's definition of music as "the practical knowledge (*peritia*) of modulation" that "consists of sound and song."[80] Isidore stands on the threshold of a profound transformation of music theory. For Augustine (notably in *De ordine*) and Boethius, music was still the classical Pythagorean-Platonic contemplation of mathematical proportion; its goal was to raise the soul above the realm of the sensual and corporeal so that it could grasp rational truth and cosmic harmony. The true musician was the philosopher who could judge the fundamental essences of music, not the performer or composer. Isidore (leaning on Cassiodorus) articulates a new Christian vision of music based on the exalted role of performed music in the Bible (especially the Psalms), and the centrality of singing in the worship of the Church. He gives a brief nod to the notion of cosmic harmony (3.1.1), but his account bypasses mathematics completely in favour of catalogues of instruments and terminology—except, tellingly, for a closing chapter on musical ratios.[81]

Mathematics seems to be reinstated when Isidore turns to astronomy. Whoever discovered astronomy—the Egyptians, the Chaldeans, Abraham, or the Greeks—

> was stirred by the movement of the heavens and prompted by the reasoning of his mind, and through the changing of the seasons, through the fixed and defined courses of the stars, through the *measured expanses* of their distances apart, he made observations of certain *dimensions and numbers*.[82]

78 *Etymologies* 3.10.3, trans. Barney *et al.*, 93. For discussion see J.-Y. Guillaumin, "Sur une définition de la géometrie dans la latinité tardive (Isidore, *Étymologies* 3.10.3)," *Mélanges Pierre Lévêque* (Besançon: 1989), vol. 2, 267–71.

79 *Etymologies* 3.11; *cf.* Ribémont, "Isidore et les mathématiques," 26–27; Ribémont, *Les origines* 115–17; Eastwood, "Early Medieval Cosmology," 320–21.

80 *Etymologies* 3.14, trans. Barney *et al.*, 95.

81 Calvin M. Bower, "The Transmission of Ancient Music Theory into the Middle Ages," *The Cambridge History of Western Music Theory*, ed. Thomas Christensen (Cambridge: 2006), 136–49.

82 *Etymologies* 3.25.2, trans. Barney *et al.*, 99 (my emphases).

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In practice, however, the account of astronomy is a description of the shape of the cosmos—a sphere (3.30), with planetary spheres nested within (3.32), that rotates on its axis (3.33–36), and is marked off into regions, hemispheres, and circles (3.43–45). Size only comes up when discussing the relative magnitude of the Sun, Moon, and Earth (3.48–49). The few references to measured time are less than satisfying: in 3.57, the Moon is said to traverse the same distance in "thirty days" (a rough approximation) as the Sun travels in 365, and in 3.66, Isidore gives the same bewildering figures for the courses of the planets through the zodiac as he relayed in *On the Nature of Things.*[83] The catalogue of star names (3.71), on the other hand, is a richly detailed mosaic of lore culled from Servius' commentary on the *Aeneid*, the Latin Aratus, Cicero, Cassiodorus, and extensive reading of Augustine. It ends with a denunciation of astrology (*mathesis*) that echoes the beginning of this section (3.27). Not only the Fathers, but even "Plato, Aristotle, and others among the pagans" condemned astral determinism and its corollary, the abnegation of free will. The study of the stars is not for "harmful computations," but to stimulate us to turn from material to heavenly things (3.39, 41).

Varro's great encyclopedia enlarged the liberal arts by adding architecture and medicine, two professions which claimed a foundation in science. Isidore retains only medicine, which he explicitly calls an "art" and which he treats as he does the other arts, first by defining it, and then by relating its "inventors" and history.[84] Medicine's privileged status in the *Etymologies*, and its position directly following astronomy, may reflect Cassiodorus' commendation of cosmography and medicine in the part of the *Institutions* devoted to "divine letters" (1.25, 1.31).[85] However, the closing chapter of book 4 goes well beyond

83 See the edition of Gasparotto and Guillaumin, 126–27 and notes.

84 Book 4 of the *Etymologies* has long been the object of scholarly interest. Older treatments include: L. Spengler, "Isidorus Hispaliensis in seiner Bedeutung für die Naturwissenschaften und Medizin," *Janus* 3 (1848), 54–90; O. Probst, "Isidors Schrift *De medicina*," *Archiv für Geschichte der Medizin* 8 (1914), 22–38; G.R. Fletcher, "St. Isidore of Seville and his Book on Medicine," *Proceedings of the Royal Society of Medicine* (*Section of the History of Medicine*) 12 (1919), 70–95. It is the subject of a monograph by H.K. Schütz, *Die Schrift De medicina des Isidor von Sevilla. Ein Beitrag zur Medizin im spätantiken Spanien* (Giessen: 1984), and a collection of essays edited by Arsenio Ferraces Rodíguez, *Isidorus medicus. Isidoro de Sevilla y los textos de medicina* (A Coruña: 2005). See also Ribémont, *Les origines*, 118–24; Bertrand Lançon, "La médecine dans l'encyclopédisme latin (1er-VIIe siècles)," *Sciences, techniques et encyclopédies. Actes du Colloque de Mortagne-au-Perche, 28–29 mars 1992*, ed. Denis Hüe (Caen: 1993), 215–26, esp. 221–23; Vivian Nutton, "Early Medieval Medicine and Natural Science," *The Cambridge History of Science,* Vol. 2: *Medieval Science*, eds. Lindberg and Shank, 335.

85 Ribémont, *Les origines*, 23.

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Cassiodorus's praise of medical care as practical piety. Isidore asks why the art of medicine is not included with "the other liberal disciplines." His unexpected answer is that it is because medicine includes and deploys all the liberal arts: grammar to read its books; rhetoric to compose case histories; dialectic to deduce cures from causes; arithmetic to track the periodicity of fevers; geometry to assess the quality of places; music for therapy; and astronomy to observe the changes of the seasons that affect the human body. "Thus medicine is called the Second Philosophy, for each discipline claims for itself the entire human: by philosophy the soul is cured; by medicine, the body."[86] This encomium is quoted in a spirited defence of medicine in the 9th-century manuscript compendium known as the *Lorscher Arzneibuch*,[87] and finds echoes in the medieval iconography of personified Medicine as the recipient of wisdom at the hands of Philosophy and Mathematics.[88] The exalted position Isidore granted medicine also played a role in its transformation into *physica* in the 12th century.[89] It also proved difficult for medieval readers to resist supplementing book 4 with additional materials on the history of medicine, and the parts of the human body.[90]

Isidore defines medicine as both therapeutic action against healing and wounds, and preventive advice about nutrition, clothing, and shelter. It thus becomes an encompassing guide to right living; this is reinforced by its etymology from "moderation" (*modus*), with its associations of virtue and wisdom.[91] His definition of health and illness is grounded in the Hippocratic-Galenic model of the four bodily humours, which are in turn linked to the four elements (4.5). The bulk of book 4, however, is divided between two topics: diseases and remedies. Isidore adopts a broadly Methodist classification of ailments into acute diseases (4.6), chronic diseases (4.7), and skin conditions (4.8), but discussion of disease is dominated by etymology: the name denotes the symptom and the symptom justifies the name.[92] Nonetheless, Isidore's knowledge of medical science should not be underestimated: his sources range

86 Isidore, *Etymologiae* 5.13, trans. Barney *et al.*, 115.

87 Ulrich Stoll, *Das 'Lorscher Arzneibuch.' Ein medizinisches Kompendium des 8. Jahrhunderts (Codex Bambergensis medicinalis 1). Text, Überseztung und Fachglossar* (Stuttgart: 1992), 50.

88 Bruce Eastwood, "The Place of Medicine in the Hierarchy of Knowledge: the Illustration in Lyon Palais des Arts, ms. 122, f. 1r, from the Eleventh Century," *Sudhoffs Archiv* 66 (1982), 20–37, esp. 27.

89 Jerome Bylebyl, "The Medical Meaning of Physica," *Osiris*, 2nd Series, 6 (1990), 24–26.

90 Carmen Codoñer, "Textes médicaux insérés dans les *Etymologiae* isidoriennes," *Cahiers de recherches médiévales* (XIIe–XVe siècles) 16 (2008), 17–37.

91 Isidore, *Etymologies* 4.2, trans. Barney *et al.*, 109; Ribémont, *Les origines* 119.

92 Ribémont, *Les origines* 121.

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from the Latin commentary on Hippocrates' *Aphorisms* to the compilation on acute diseases called *Aurelius*, from Vegetius's work on veterinary medicine *Digesta artis mulomedicinalis*, to pseudo-Soranus' *Quaestiones medicinales*, Ambrose's *Hexaemeron*, and the letters of Jerome.[93] His grasp of some specialized topics, like melancholy, is quite sophisticated.[94] His discussion of therapeutic remedies (4.9) conveys the Hippocratic order of resort from regimen, through drugs, to surgery, and briefly discusses curing by opposites and similars, before launching into a catalogue of remedies, forms of medical literature (4.10), and tools (4.11).

3.2 Etymologies (2)*: The Inventory of Nature*

The book on medicine was often paired with book 11, "On the human being and on portents," by medieval (and modern) readers, because book 11 covers human anatomy, physiology, psychology, and embryology. However, Isidore consults almost no medical sources for this book, apart from pseudo-Soranus' *Quaestiones medicinales*. Instead, he leans heavily on Lactantius (*Institutiones*, *De opificio Dei*),[95] supplemented by Augustine, Ambrose's *Hexaemeron*, Tertullian, and above all, Servius's glosses on Virgil. When he turns to monsters in the second half of the book, he draws on Augustine's *City of God* 16.8, and Solinus.[96] In consequence, book 11 strikes a more metaphysical and moral tone than book 4.

Book 11 begins with the soul (*anima*), will (*animus*), mind (*mens*), memory, reasoning, and sensation (11.1.7–13).[97] These form a hierarchy, with sensation as the link between soul and body. The body in turn is an epitome of the four elements: earth (flesh), air (breath), water (blood), and fire (vital heat) (11.1.16).

93 Klaus-Dietrich Fischer, "Neue oder vernachlässigte Quellen der *Etymologien* Isidors von Sevilla (Buch 4 und 11)," in *Isidorus medicus*, ed. Ferraces Rodíguez, 131–74; Manuel E. Vázquez Buján, "Isidoro de Sevilla y los libros de medicina. A propósito del Antiguo comentario latino a los *Aforismos* hipocráticos," in *Isidorus medicus*, ed. Ferraces Rodíguez, 245–62.

94 Jackie Pigeaud, "De la mélancholie et de quelques autres maladies dans les *Etymologies* d'Isidore de Séville." *Textes médicaux latins antiques* (Saint-Etienne: 1984), 87–107.

95 F. Gasti, *L'antropologia di Isidoro. Le fonti del libro XI delle Etimologie* (Como: 1988); F. Gasti, "Lattanzio e Isidoro: aspetti storico-culturali di una compilazione," in *Le De opificio Dei: regards croisés sur l'anthropologie de Lactance* (Saint-Étienne: 2007), 131–47; Cesare Magazzù, "L'influsso del *De opificio dei* di Lattanzio sul libro XI delle *Etymologiae* di Isidoro," *Bolletino di studi latini* 12 (1982), 247–50.

96 F. Gasti, "I Collectanea di Solino come fonte del libro XI delle *Etymologiae* di Isidoro," *Athanaeum* 66 (1988), 121–29.

97 On Isidore's classification of psychological functions, see Fontaine, *Isidore culture*, 689–92.

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Hence Isidore treats the senses (11.1.18–24) separately from the organs of sensation, which are lodged in the head (11.1.25). The hierarchical principle now becomes structural. Isidore begins with the crown (*vertex*) of the head, where the hairs grow in a whorl (11.1.26), and inches his way down to the temples, to the eyes, cheeks, and jaw before turning to the ears, nostrils, and mouth. After reaching the feet, he turns to the internal organs: the heart, vessels, lungs, liver, spleen, intestines, uterus, and bladder. Throughout this survey, his etymological method supports a kind of teleological reasoning, mixed with allusions to the exceptional stature of the human being as the pinnacle of creation. The neck (*collum*), for example, is a like a column (*columns*) "carrying the head and sustaining it as if it were a citadel"; the fingers (*digiti*) take their name either from the "perfect number" ten (*decem*) or because their arrangement is seemly (*decenter*), and so on.[98] By contrast, there is almost no structural description of human anatomy or discussion of physiology: for example, in the chapter on the heart (11.1.118), the two main vessels are mentioned but not given distinctive names. The left one contains "more blood" and the right "more air," but Isidore does not explain what venous and arterial blood do, or the role that the heart plays in the genesis and regulation of vital heat.

A short discussion of embryology (11.1.143) ushers in a section on the life cycle (11.2). This is also Isidore's opportunity to discuss gender differences (11.2.17–28), though gender in fact permeates book 11: there are distinctive terms for men's and women's hair (11.1.28) and lips (11.1.50), and the very word *femina* comes from the thigh (*femur*), whose structure differentiates the sexes (11.1.106).[99]

Generation and embryology also cue the second half of book 11, on portents. A portent is an "unnatural being" (*portenuosus*), though Isidore distinguishes between the "normal abnormal" (such as a person with six fingers), and a "being of transformed appearance" (11.3.6). The latter include humans who are part animal (11.3.9), or who exhibit the attributes of both sexes (11.3.11). However, "abnormality" is problematic when whole races of "monstrous" people presumably reproduce after their kind (11.3.12–27).[100] Finally, there are the purely imaginary monsters of pagan fable, like the Sirens or Cerberus, "which

98 *Etymologies* 11.1.60 and 11.1.70, trans. Barney *et al.*, 235; cf. Fontaine, *Isidore culture*, 660–76.

99 Maria Jesús Pérez Ibañez, "La distinción sexual hombre y mujer," in *Medicine y filología. Estudios de léxico médico latin en la Edad Media*, ed. Ana Isabel Martín Ferreira (Porto: 2010), 200.

100 The analysis of Isidore's views in Beagon, "Variations on a Theme" is particularly salient here.

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do not exist but are concocted to interpret the causes of things."[101] But if Isidore is skeptical about the Hydra or the Chimaera, he treats stories about metamorphosis in a more neutral manner, rather as he discusses the monstrous races. He ends with a note on creatures which undergo natural mutation, like bees or beetles that emerge from rotting flesh (11.4.3).

The mixture of human and animal in the monsters of book 11 sets the stage for Isidore's survey of animals in book 12. Isidore's classification of animals has excited considerable interest.[102] He begins by invoking Adam's naming of the animals, and the classification seems structured by terminology: livestock (*pecus*) and draft animals (*iumenta*) (12.1), "beasts" (*bestiae*) (12.2), "small animals" (12.3), snakes (12.4), "vermin" (12.5), fish (12.6), birds (12.7), and "tiny flying animals"—essentially insects (12.8). This order broadly replicates that of Pliny's *Natural History* books 8–11, but Isidore offers us several ways to read this sequence. Adam's naming of the animals suggests an orientation based on the relationship of animal to human: hence domesticates come first. The presence of the dog amongst the *bestiae*, however, hints that the distinction is also between herbivores and carnivores.[103] Size matters as well, but the small animals of 12.3 (mice, moles, and their like, but also crickets) all share the habit of living underground, so "smaller" also means "lower." "Vermin" are the least animal of animals, because they generate spontaneously; but they are also disgusting and frightening creatures, like spiders, leeches, lice, and maggots. When he comes to fish,[104] however, Isidore insists that their name (*piscis*) is related to *pecus*, or "livestock" (12.6.1): implicitly, then, the first five chapters dealt with the animals that live on the earth, and now he begins anew with water animals. Fish are more problematic for Isidore, however, because their names, and thus their natures and classification, are less sharply delineated than those of land animals. Land animals were named before fish, because fish are less visible; thus, many water animals take their names from the land animals they resemble (12.4.4). It is almost with a sense of relief that Isidore turns to birds, which are grouped under a single generic term, though they vary considerably in their nature (12.7.1). On the other hand, Isidore does not use Pliny's term *insecta* for the bees, wasps, moths, and flies of 12.8.

101 *Etymologies* 11.3.28, trans. Barney *et al.*, 245.

102 I. Bona, "La classificazione zoologica isidorea: aspetti positivi e negativi in rapporto alle classificazioni precedenti," *Koinonia* 13 (1989), 153–64.

103 Liliane Bodson, "Les paradoxes du témoignage d'Isidore de Séville sur les chiens (*Etymologies* XII, 2, 25–28)," *Milieux naturels, espaces sociaux: Etudes offertes à Robert Delort,* eds. Elisabeth Mornet and Franco Morenzoni (Paris: 1997), 177–88.

104 Ferruccio Bertini, "Il catalogo dei pesci in Isidoro," *Reinardus* 23 (2010–2011), 1–11.

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Within this complex articulation of the animal kingdom, Isidore integrates a wide range of lore from Pliny[105] as well as his more ubiquitous sources: Servius, Ambrose, and Solinus. The issue of whether he used the Latin *Physiologus*, either directly or indirectly, is a matter for debate, as he does not propose any symbolic or allegorical interpretations.[106] On the other hand, the book on animals provides considerable detail. Compared, for example, to the discussion of human anatomy in book 11, there is a wealth of information here (albeit unevenly distributed) about the appearance, habitat, and behaviour of animals. For example, the chapter on snakes closes with a lengthy treatment of venom, hibernation, self-regeneration after wounding, vision, and locomotion in snakes, and their habit of shedding their skin. In consequence, this book of the *Etymologies* contributed a substantial share of the Middle Ages' knowledge about animals, particularly before the recovery of Aristotle's biological works in the 13th century.[107]

Etymologies book 16 on minerals also exerted a huge influence on the later encyclopedias and lapidaries,[108] and for much the same reason, namely, that besides etymologizing the name, it also describes characteristics, locations, and uses. Sometimes the etymology is omitted altogether, such as in the section on bitumen (16.2.1), which nonetheless dilates on how it is gathered on the surface of the Dead Sea, how it cannot be broken (save by menstrual blood), and how it is used to caulk ships.[109] Book 16 also contains numerous tantalizing references to how magicians use stones, as well as memorable anecdotes, like the story of the man who invented unbreakable glass and was executed for his pains by the emperor Tiberius, lest his invention drive down the value of gold and silver. Isidore's classification of stones and metals, by contrast, is somewhat neutral. He starts with mineral substances that are the products of earth itself—dust, mud, clay, but also sulphur (16.1)—and then turns to those that come from water, notably salt (16.2). Stones (*lapides*) are divided into "ordinary" (*vulgares*: 16.3) and "more important" (*insigniores*: 16.4), that is, with

105 J. Oroz Reta, "Présence de Pline dans les *Etymologies* de saint Isidore de Séville," *Helmantica* 38 (1987), 295–306.

106 André (introduction to edition of Book 12, 19–21) argues for Isidore's use of *Physiologus*; Bertini, "Il catalogo," 1–2 is more cautious.

107 This can be appreciated by consulting the index of Jacques Voisenet, *Bêtes et hommes dans le monde médiéval. Le bestiare des clercs du Ve au XIIe siècle* (Turnhout: 2000).

108 Isabelle Draelants, "Encyclopédies et lapidaires médiévaux. La durable authorité d'Isidore de Séville et de ses *Étymologies*," *Cahiers de recherches médiévales* 16 (2008), 39–91; see also the introduction to Féans Landeira's edition of book 16, LXIII–LXXIII.

109 Isidore's source here, as for much of book 16, is Pliny: see the edition of Féans Landeira, LIX–LXII and 315–16.

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remarkable qualities, like the magnet. Marble merits a chapter of its own (16.5), but gemstones are classified by colour: green (16.7), red (16.8), purple (16.9), white (16.10), black (16.11), varicoloured (16.12), crystalline (16.13), fiery (16.14), and golden (16.15). Glass (16.16) bridges the gems with the metals: gold (16.18), silver (16.19), bronze (16.20), iron (16.21), lead (16.22), tin (16.23), and electrum (16.24). Book 16 ends with an important synopsis of Roman weights and volumetric measurements, which was often excerpted on its own.

In book 17, plants are situated within the context of "rural affairs" (*de rebus rusticis*), which, like the liberal arts or medicine, has "inventors" and a systematic body of literature (17.1). That being said, the bulk of the book is a catalogue of the plant kingdom. Unlike the animals of book 12, however, Isidore's plants are only those cultivated or exploited by humans, and the accent is overwhelmingly on vocabulary, rather than a description of the actual plant. Nonetheless, details concerning vine-dressing (17.5) and grafting (17.6.11) slip in, as well as comments on the qualities of different varieties of fruit. The chapters on exotic trees and spices (16.8–9) are rather more expansive; Isidore's remarks on the adulteration of black pepper (16.8.8) and balsam (16.8.14) suggest one reason why they are more expansive, but he can also presume less familiarity with the plant on the part of his readers. "Aromatic or common plants" (16.9) covers a wide spectrum from flowers like iris and rose, to weeds like burdock (16.9.66), and plants cultivated for their medicinal qualities. Two chapters on garden vegetables (17.10) and culinary herbs (17.11) close the series.

The sources of book 17 are quite diverse: Servius and Solinus, and the Fathers, notably Ambrose, are still Isidore's mainstays, but he also draws on Roman works on husbandry by Columella and Palladius. Gargilius Martialis's *Medicine from Vegetables and Fruits* (*Medicina ex oleribus et pomis*) bridges horticulture and medicine, but Isidore's medico-botanical reading is more difficult to get into focus. He may have used one or more translations or reworkings of Dioscorides. The total absence of Pliny is remarkable.[110]

3.3 Etymologies (*3*)*: The System of the World Revisited*

Between book 12 on animals and book 16 on stones and metals lie two books which reprise themes from *On the Nature of Things*: book 13 on the "world-system," and book 14 on "earth and its parts," comprising both the disposition of lands and regions, and physical features like islands, promontories, and mountains. Fontaine finds the positioning of this material significant: a survey

110 See the introduction to André's edition of book 17, 6–11; and Brigitte Maire, "Isidore de Séville, lecteur de Gargilius Martialis," in *Isidorus medicus*, 197–213.

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of the macrocosm to parallel the microcosm of the human body in book 11.[111] But this ignores the role of the animals of book 12, which form an ascending ladder from terrestrial animals, to marine animals, and finally to the birds of the air. Books 13 and 14 literally bring us down from the sky to the earth again, where we can consider the products of the earth, namely metals and plants.

Book 13 begins on a grandiose note with a definition of the universe (*mundus*) that encompasses the whole of creation (13.1). The discussion of the four cardinal directions (13.1.3–8) seems to echo the book on astronomy (cf. 3.43), but Isidore will not tarry long in the heavens. The two classic theories of the structure of matter, namely atomism (13.2) and element theory (13.3), are laid out in a dry and didactic manner, but it is evidently the latter of which Isidore (and his source, Lactantius) approves, for it reflects the architecture of creation:

> The elements are assigned by Divine Providence to the appropriate living beings, for the Creator himself has filled heaven [i.e. the fiery realm] with angels, air with birds, water with fish, and earth with humans and the rest of the living things.[112]

After three chapters on the structure of the celestial sphere (13.4–6; cf. 3.21–44), Isidore turns to "meteorology." The order mirrors that of *On the Nature of Things* quite closely:

Etym. **13**	*On the Nature of Things*
7. Air and clouds	32. Clouds
8. Thunder	29. Thunder
9. Lightning	30. Lightning
10. The rainbow and phenomena of clouds [including rain, hail, and snow]	31. The rainbow; 33. Rains; 34. Snow; 35. Hail
11. Winds	36.–37. Winds
12. Waters	–
13. Different kinds of water	*cf.* 42. Why the sea has bitter waters
14. The sea	44. The names of the sea and the rivers

111 Fontaine, *Isidore culture* pt. 5, Ch. 3.

112 *Etymologiae* 13.3.3; trans. Barney *et al.*, 272.

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Etym. 13	*On the Nature of Things*
15. The Ocean	*cf.* 40. The Ocean's tide
16. The Mediterranean Sea	*cf.* 44. The names of the sea and the rivers
17. Gulfs of the sea	*cf.* 44. The names of the sea and the rivers
18. Tides and straits	*cf.* 40. The Ocean's tide
19. Lakes and pools	–
20. The abyss	44. The names of the sea and the rivers
21. Rivers	*cf.* 43. The river Nile
22. Floods	–

Isidore is generally not interested in considering problems in the *Etymologies*: for example, he does not bring up the "waters above the firmament" or explain why the sea is salt. On the other hand, his discussion of weather phenomena relates how lightning and rainbows are produced. The chapter on the Mediterranean is an opportunity for an extended tour of "the Great Sea," strewn with nuggets of history and mythology, while Chapter 21 opens onto a gazetteer of rivers, reading from the Niles and Ganges in the east to Isidore's own Guadalquivir in southern Spain.

Book 14 follows a similar trajectory, from Asia westwards to Europe and then to Africa, and within each of these continents, from east to west in two "sweeps," first through the south, and then through the north. Asia, for example, begins in the earthly Paradise (14.3.2–4) and then moves from India, through Parthia, Mesopotamia, Syria, and Palestine to Egypt. Isidore then returns east to trace a line from China through Scythia, Hyrcania, *Albania* (i.e. Georgia), Armenia, Asia Minor, Phrygia, and Pamphilia, ending in Cilicia.[113] Etymology becomes a key to history, as the names of places are often derived from eponymous founders, or aboriginal peoples.[114] After the continents come the islands (14.4). Here, the west-to-east order is abandoned in favour of a periphery-to-centre axis, beginning with the British Isles and the Atlantic islands, leaping to the islands

113 A.H. Merrills, "Isidore's *Etymologies*," 317–18; A.H. Merrills, "Geography and Memory in Isidore's *Etymologies*," in *Mapping Medieval Geographies: Geographical Encounters in the Latin West and Beyond, 300–1600*, ed. Keith D. Lilley (Cambridge: 2013), 49–54.

114 Olga Spevak, "Isidore de Séville: le livre XIV des *Etymologiae* et la tradition étymologique," *Revue des études latines* 87 (2010), 231–48.

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of the Indian Ocean, and coming to rest in the Mediterranean, whose islands are once again enumerated from east to west. Isidore's geography is remarkably sophisticated in its grasp of spatial order and the contiguity of provinces and regions, but it also innovates with respect to his sources. Unlike Orosius or Solinus, he makes no distinction between the Roman Empire and the lands beyond. Isidore's is a truly Christian and universal geography.[115]

Book 14 ends with gazetteers of promontories (14.7); landforms, like mountains and mountain ranges, hills, woods, groves, and miscellaneous "places"; coastal features (14.8); and finally subterranean structures, from caves to Gehenna (14.9). The survey of the world that began with the encomium of the universe in all its fullness and fairness ends, literally, in hell. For Isidore's Christian geography is also a moral macrocosm: "Just as the heart of an animal is in its centre, so also the underworld is said to be in the centre of the earth," and the infernal regions (*inferi*) are so called "because souls are carried (*ferre*) there from here."[116]

4 Conclusion

Patrick Gautier Dalché characterizes Isidore's *Etymologies*, in a felicitous oxymoron, as an "original compilation,"[117] and the description applies equally well to *On the Nature of Things.* It also allows us to reframe Isidore's science by moving beyond its oft-cited weaknesses and lacunae, and considering its larger purpose. Isidore was the first Christian intellectual to attempt to give a full account of the material creation in both its grand architecture and its manifold and diverse contents, and to join, and (in part) integrate this knowledge with the disciplines of the *quadrivium*. The sheer scope and methodical perseverance of his scientific writing gave medieval Europe not only a treasury of information about the created world, but a capacious and ambitious way of imagining scientific knowledge as a conversation between mathematics, the world-system, and the inventories of natural history.[118] By his practice of

115 Patrick Gautier Dalché, "Principes et modes de la réprésentation de l'espace géographique durant le haut moyen age," *Settimane di Studio* 50 (2003), 126–29; Patrick Gautier Dalché, "Sur 'l'originalité' de la 'géographie' médiévale," in *Auctor et auctoritas: invention et conformisme dans l'écriture médiévale. Actes du colloque tenu à l'Université de Versailles-Saint-Quentin-en-Yvelines (14–16 juin 1999),* ed. Michel Zimmermann (Paris: 2001), 140–41.

116 *Etymologiae* 14.9.11, trans. Barney *et al.*, 300.

117 Gautier Dalché, "Principes et modes," 128.

118 See the contributions by Sinéad O'Sullivan, Martin J. Ryan and Winston Black in the present volume.

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compilation, Isidore also quietly, even surreptitiously, persuaded his readers that Christian truth and classical science could collaborate in shaping a new model of erudition.[119]

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119 See the contributions of Jacques Elfassi and Thomas O'Loughlin in the present volume.

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CHAPTER 8

Isidore of Seville as a Grammarian

José Carracedo Fraga

1 Introduction

Isidore of Seville was born into a Hispano-Roman family of noble origin, and as such, he had access to a well-rounded education. It was his brother Leander, twenty years his senior, monk and then bishop of Seville (*c.*578–*c.*601), who oversaw a great part of his schooling; Leander was, indubitably, the most prominent personality within the culture of Visigothic Iberia at the end of the 6th century. Grammatical studies were accorded the utmost importance at the school in Seville where Isidore was a student, as well as in other Visigothic-era institutions cemented in a more classical tradition. As a result, this school of thought not only shaped Isidore's education but also his way of understanding instruction, the acquisition of knowledge, and thus his vast literary work, which focused on comprehensive instruction for the clergy. Grammar, thought of as an "all-encompassing science" ("una ciencia totalitaria"), is therefore an essential element to describe and understand the person of Isidore, and his concern for the intellectual and spiritual instruction of readers of his writings and teachings.[1]

2 Isidore's Grammatical Programme

An entire book addressing grammatical concepts is found at the beginning of Isidore's universal encyclopaedia of all knowledge, called the *Etymologiae*.

1 The correct and successful expression "la gramática ciencia totalitaria" concerning Isidore is taken from Eleuterio Elorduy, "San Isidoro, unidad orgánica de su educación reflejada en sus escritos, la gramática ciencia totalitaria," in *Miscellanea Isidoriana. Homenaje a S. Isidoro de Sevilla en el XIII centenario de su muerte* (Rome: 1936), 293–322. On Isidore's education and the influence of his brother Leander, see the chapter by Purificación Ubric Rabaneda in this volume. An excellent description of the Visigothic schooling in general and that of Isidore is found in Manuel C. Díaz y Díaz, "Introducción general," in José Oroz Reta and Manuel A. Marcos Casquero, trans., *San Isidoro de Sevilla, Etimologías* (Madrid: 2004), 70–94 and 104–06.

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Isidore himself provides a reason for this (*Etym.* 1.5.1):[2] "Grammar is the knowledge of speaking correctly, and is the origin and foundation of liberal letters." Grammar is the origin and foundation of all education. In other words, the entire formative process is based on grammar, and without grammar one cannot acquire knowledge. A good command of a language is vital to have access to any other sphere of knowledge, as it is only through language and words that we can interpret reality. The method that Isidore utilizes to create his great work is just a grammatical element: the etymology. However, this way of understanding grammar is not exclusive to the Sevillian erudite; it relates precisely to early scholastic instruction and had, within the Christian context, important promoters, such as Augustine of Hippo and Cassiodorus. Both authors are found among the ones that most inspired Isidore, and to the former he owes his definition of grammar cited above.[3]

The first book of the *Etymologiae* is, as mentioned, a complete grammatical manual despite having been written with the synthesis and brevity that characterize the encyclopedia and Isidore's work more generally.[4] Its main inspiration is the treatises of Aelius Donatus, a key referent for grammarians during the late Middle Ages.[5] It includes the three major themes defined in each of the three books of the *Ars maior* from the Roman teacher: the minor elements of language (*littera*, *syllaba*, *pedes*, *toni*, *positurae*), the eight parts of speech, or

2 "Grammatica est scientia recte loquendi, et origo et fundamentum liberalium litterarum." I quote the text of the *Etymologiae* from the edition by Wallace M. Lindsay, *Isidori Hispalensis episcopi Etymologiarum sive Originum libri XX*, 2 vols (Oxford: 1911). All the translations of the Latin texts are mine. Jacques Fontaine, *Isidore de Séville et la culture classique dans l'Espagne wisigothique*, 2nd ed. (Paris: 1983), 53–54, talks about how Isidore intentionally uses the same word *origo* to define grammar and etymology alike (*origo vocabulorum*: "origin of words," *Etymologiae* 1.29.1). The importance of grammar is clearly emphasized, as it constitutes the introduction of Isidore's great encyclopaedia and he allocated much more space to this subject than to any other of the liberal arts.

3 Besides having penned works that were specifically grammatical, Augustine insists, in many of his texts, on the importance of grammatical instruction as a foundation of all general culture and especially Christianity. Cassiodorus offers his educational plan in his *Institutiones*, and in the second book of this work he gives special attention to grammar. The definition of grammar Isidore copied is found in *Institutiones* 2.praef. see also Cassiodorus *Variae* 9.21.

4 On the role of brevity in Isidore's work see the chapter by Graham Barrett in this volume.

5 Despite the fact that Isidore cited his sources very seldom, on four occasions he mentions Donatus in the first book of the *Etymologiae* (6.1; 16.2, where he directly recommends *lege Donatum*, "read Donatus"; 33.4; 37.1). To learn of Donatus's importance during the Middle Ages, the best reference continues to be Louis Holtz, *Donat et la tradition de l'enseignement grammatical. Étude sur l'Ars Donati et sa diffusion* (*IVe–IXe siècle*) *et édition critique* (Paris: 1981; repr. 2010), esp. 254–61 for the relationship between Isidore and the Roman teacher. An interesting presentation of Donatus and his later influence can be read in Federica Ciccolella, *Donati Graeci: Learning Greek in the Renaissance* (Leiden: 2008), 1–73.

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partes orationis (*nomen*, *pronomen*, *verbum*, *participium*, *adverbium*, *coniunctio*, *praepositio*, *interiectio*), and the defects and adornments in the use of language (*vitia et virtutes orationis*). Nevertheless, Isidore lays out his contents in an order different from Donatus's original, which was the one circulating in Visigothic Hispania. In this new order we find at the beginning the *partes orationis*, generally congruent with the model of the *Ars minor* from the Roman grammarian. Following this section were the equivalent parts to the aforementioned books from the *Ars maior*, but in the order 1, 3, 2. This results in a circular structure in which the word categories, as main elements, open and close the grammatical teachings, first at a basic level and lastly with a more specialized approach. An organizational variant of this model, also typical of Visigothic schools, is the one that Isidore employs. It consists in avoiding duplication in two different places the teachings about the *partes orationis* and in compiling this entire chapter at the beginning. As a result, we obtain the following sequence: 2, 1, 3. The content of the *Ars minor* can then be subsumed in the part corresponding to book 2 of the *Ars maior,* or, as in the *Etymologiae*, can be completely eliminated.[6]

Isidore still introduces some other variants in this last structure and omits a short chapter, *De voce*, which is the heading of the *Ars maior*. Servius and Pompeius, commentators on Donatus's works who were well known within Visigothic-era schools, had already eliminated that chapter, and so it disappeared from the Visigothic grammatical tradition. In a context in which grammar is almost exclusively focused on the good command of the written language, the short reference to an aspect related to oral language becomes unnecessary. Isidore introduces another variant: placing the chapter on letters at the beginning of his manual on grammar,[7] even before the definition of the term *grammatica*. His reasons for this modification are as follows: the teaching of letters and numbers corresponds to the named *ludorum magister* and thus constitutes the first academic stage, prior to that of the *grammaticus*.

6 See Louis Holtz, "Le *De grammatica* des *Étymologies* d'Isidore de Séville, structure générale et traitement des sources," in *IV Congresso Internacional de Latim Medieval Hispânico*, eds. Aires A. Nascimento and Paulo F. Alberto (Lisbon: 2006), 55–68, and José Carracedo Fraga, "De gramáticas y gramáticos en la Hispania visigótica," in *Wisigothica. After M.C. Díaz y Díaz*, eds. Carmen Codoñer and Paulo Farmhouse Alberto (Florence: 2014), 69–71.

7 There are actually two chapters (1.3–4) dedicated respectively to *litterae communes* (the term is defined and it pertains to the first alphabets) and specifically to Latin letters. At the beginning of the corresponding part of book 1 of the *Ars maior* some codices of the *Etymologiae* include a very brief paragraph entitled *De litteris apud grammaticos* and in which the aforementioned definition of the term is repeated (1.3.3); that brief chapter (1.15) seems to have been added later to re-establish the order of the contents by Donatus.

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Moreover, Isidore completes the basic grammatical program as defined by Donatus's manuals and includes several other complements which he considers important within the sphere of grammar. At the end of the section corresponding to book 1 of the *Ars maior* he adds two supplements: some brief chapters (1.21–26) about graphic signs, and a thorough chapter on orthography (1.27). The first ones are a complement to the chapter on punctuation, useful and practical for scribes and readers. The second one meets the need to clearly stipulate the orthographical norms of a written language which was becoming more dissimilar to spoken language. This need had led to the creation of monographic manuals on orthography since the 2nd century A.D., including that of Cassiodorus, a model for Isidore.[8]

The chapter on orthography lends itself to the introduction of other important additions to the text before addressing the contents of book 3 of the *Ars maior*, before the discussion of the mistakes that should be avoided in proper language and the adornments that can render such language more eloquent and effective. The review of letters and graphical problems allows the Sevillian bishop to call attention to one of his main concerns: vocabulary. A great portion of the elements cited in this chapter on orthography has to do with words which are phonetically similar and can only be distinguished if they are learned and written with the correct spelling. Isidore then introduces four "grammatical categories" taught since antiquity at the school of the *grammaticus* and which he clearly associates with vocabulary: *analogia* (1.28), *etymologia* (1.29), *glossa* (1.30), *differentia* (1.31). The main purpose of these complementary categories is the *varietas* ("variety") and the *proprietas* ("propriety") in the acquisition and command of lexis; in other words, the knowledge and usage of a vast and varied vocabulary, taking into consideration each word and its specific meaning. Having the ability to be able to select the words and arrange them with precision to express thoughts would allow the utterer to communicate with the accuracy and elegance that the grammarian aims to teach.[9]

8 Cassiodorus prioritized orthography in his grammatical teachings (*Institutiones* 2.1.2) and also wrote his own manual *De orthographia*, which was one of the direct models for Isidore and his main source for the chapter on orthography: at least 25 passages refer back to Cassiodorus's manual; see Patricia Stoppacci, *Casiodoro. De orthographia* (Florence: 2010), CLXXVII–CLXXX. Isidore had a great repertoire of manuals on orthography, which he also utilized for that specific chapter and for a number of his writings, especially for the *Differentiae*: Scaurus, (Ps.-)Caper, Agroetius, Velius Longus.

9 The analysis of these four categories, which became the model, is taken from Fontaine, *Isidore de Séville et la culture classique*, 38–48. If we leave aside analogy, a grammatical category considered more general and complementary to the other ones, it seems as if Isidore presents the other three grammatical categories in the order of greater to lesser importance and complexity, and in reverse sequence, as we will see, to the chronological order

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The *analogia* ("analogy") is a systematization principle in ancient grammar based on the similarity between elements, in the knowledge of an element from its similarities to another known element. Isidore mainly associates analogy with the precise identification of vocabulary. The *etymologia* ("etymology") allows us to know the exact meaning of a word on the basis of its origin and its natural association with what the word denotes. The *glossa* ("gloss") refers to the explanation of a word through another having the same or an analogous meaning; it is therefore directly linked to analogy and synonymy. The *differentia* ("difference") is the specific element distinguishing a word from another very similar in meaning and form. Isidore uses these four grammatical categories as a methodological basis for research and literary creation. Not only do they appear with great frequency in Isidore's writings, but they also serve as a specific outline providing the title to some of his works, as we have stated with regards to the *Etymologiae* and we will analyse in more detail later in the case of the *Differentiae* and the *Synonyma*.[10]

To close this first book dedicated to the study of grammar in the *Etymologiae*, Isidore adds other chapters that differ from the structure of Donatus's technical manuals: *De prosa* (1.38), *De metris* (1.39), *De fabula* (1.40), *De historia* (1.41–44). His aim is to complete the grammatical curriculum with a brief introduction to the literary genres, first establishing a difference between poetry and prose and then between the genres of fiction and history. These chapters probably constitute a way to introduce, in a theoretical manual, a practical task and a very important component of the grammarian's teachings: the *enarratio auctorum*, or the analysis of those texts deemed exemplary due to their good use of language.[11]

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of the composition of the works to which they lend their names (of course, that is if we understand *glossa* as a form of synonymy).

10 What Jacques Fontaine calls "the Isidorian grammatical *triptyche*" is found in *Isidore de Séville et la culture classique*, 36–55, and in *Isidore de Séville. Genèse et originalité de la culture hispanique au temps des Wisigoths* (Turnhout: 2000), 167–82. For a more detailed analysis of the *etymologia* (also in relation to other three categories) and the work to which it lends its name, refer to the chapter by Jacques Elfassi in this volume.

11 Isidore pays special attention to the chapter on metre, especially as a complement to the preceding chapter on metrical feet (1.17), in order to provide a comprehensive treatment of the elements of prosody and metrics, which were objects of great interest in Visigothic schools; see José Carracedo Fraga, "Poesía y poetas en la escuela visigótica," in *Poesía latina medieval* (*siglos V–XV*). *Actas del IV Congreso del Internationales Mittellateinerkomitee*, eds. Manuel C. Díaz y Díaz and José M. Díaz de Bustamante (Florence: 2005), 93–107; Carracedo Fraga, "De gramáticas y gramáticos," 76–77 and 83–85; Paulo F. Alberto, "Poesía visigótica y escuela carolingia," in *Latinidad medieval hispánica*, ed. Juan F. Mesa Sanz (Florence: 2017), 27–53.

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We are not aware of a specific model that could have served as a reference in Isidore's complete grammatical curriculum presented in his *Etymologiae*. It is evident that Isidore inherited a grammatical tradition that had transformed Donatus's manuals into basic models, but he had also seen the need to complement the outline with other content deemed important for grammatical training. As we have seen, Cassiodorus is an example of this *Donatus auctus,* since he includes orthography and etymology among the fundamental elements of grammar. At the beginning of an *Ars grammatica*, copied under the name of Sergius in the codex Lat. 2 (s. VII/VIII) at the Biblioteca Nazionale of Naples, one can read this most complete presentation similar to the program that Isidore proposes (fol. 55r-v):[12] "Grammar is the teaching of a correct language. It includes the following contents: letters, syllables, accents, feet, the eight parts of speech, anomalies, defects, figures, clauses, metres, etymology, orthography, explanation of historians and poets." It is evident that Isidore is also introducing his personal experience, his syllabus as a student and a teacher at the school in Seville.

An important aspect to consider is the process of Christianization at the school of the grammarian. It had been taking place since late antiquity within the Christian West, especially in the north of Africa, and it enjoyed great growth in Visigothic Hispania.[13] The grammatical teachings are mainly aimed at the service of Christianity. The clergy must possess a well-rounded education in order to properly understand and interpret Scripture as well as effectively carry out their pastoral duties. Isidore, therefore, understands and promotes the combination between secular and Christian culture as two necessary complementary elements. Perhaps what is most noteworthy is Isidore's pursuit of equilibrium among the two, which entails respect and an explicit awareness of all the good that a classical tradition can bestow. One can clearly observe this, for instance, in the chapters devoted to the *vitia et virtutes orationis* in the

12 "Ars grammatica institutio sermonis periti. Haec his rebus continetur: litteris, syllabis, accentibus, pedibus, VIII partibus orationis, anomalis, vitiis, figuris, clausulis, metris, etymologia, orthographia, expositione historicorum et poetarum." The text is transcribed in the *Grammatici Latini*, 7, 537–38. See Luigi Munzi, "Spigolature grammaticali in una silloge scolastica carolingia," *Bollettino dei Classici* 14 (1993), 110–15, and Holtz, "Le *De grammatica*," 67–68. Remember also that in the fifth book of the *Ars grammatica* by Charisius there is a chapter on *De differentiis*, another on *Glossulae multifariae idem significantes*, and another on *Synonyma* (ed. Karl Barwick [Leipzig: 1925], 386–403, 408–12, and 412–49, respectively), although Charisius's authorship is not certain.

13 See José Carracedo Fraga, "La cristianización de la gramática latina en la Hispania visigótica," *Compostellanum* 40 (2000), 389–410; José Carracedo Fraga, "Cristianización del capítulo *de vitiis et virtutibus orationis* en las gramáticas visigóticas," *Revista de Poética Medieval* 17 (2006), 23–47.

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first book of the *Etymologiae* (32–37). We know that Isidore had at his disposal a specific Christianized treatise which included, for each element covered, numerous examples from both classical and Christian authors and from the Bible.[14] However, in his brief presentation Isidore offers, almost always (only on four occasions does he include a citation from the Bible), an example from a classical work, preferably the one included by Donatus himself.

3 The *Differentiae*

Three treatises on *differentiae* were attributed to Isidore and under his name circulated in medieval codices. These are known as, respectively, *Inter caelum/Inter aptum*, *Inter Deum*, and *Inter polliceri*.[15] If we agree, however, with Braulio of Zaragoza's statement in his *Renotatio librorum Domini Isidori* ("he published two books of *Differentiae*"), it is almost certain that Isidore was the author of only two of these treatises.[16] For this reason, it is highly likely that Isidore did not write the *Inter polliceri*, as it exhibits many differences in comparison with the other two works, and especially because of the fact that he does not use a single Patristic source.[17] The specific attribution in the majority of the pre-9th-century manuscripts transmitting the works and the citations of subsequent authors assure Isidore's authorship of the *Inter Deum*. The Isidorian authorship of the *Inter caelum* is also confirmed by older manuscript transmission as well as coincidences between the prologue and presentation of this work in the aforementioned *Renotatio*, written by Braulio.[18]

14 See Carracedo Fraga, "Cristianización del capítulo," 28–36.

15 From now on I will use the term *Inter caelum* to refer to the first of the treatises, as *inter caelum et aethera* is the first theme in this treatise according to the original thematic order. A subsequent alphabetical version led to the change to first place of the *inter aptum et utile* and, given that this version was edited in the *Patrologia Latina*, 83, 9–70, *Inter aptum* became the usual way to allude to the brief treatise before its most recent edition. On the relationship between the three treatises see: María Adelaida Andrés Sanz, "Relación y transmisión manuscrita de los tres libros de *Differentiae* editados en PL 83 (Isidoro de Sevilla)," *Revue d'Histoire des Textes* 30 (2000), 239–62.

16 Braulio of Zaragoza, *Renotatio librorum domini Isidori*, José Carlos Martín, ed., *Scripta de uita Isidori Hispalensis episcopi*, CCSL 113B (Turnhout: 2006), 200: "Edidit enim libros Differentiarum duos."

17 The editor of the *Inter polliceri* has already tried to clearly demonstrate that this treatise could not have been written by Isidore: Myra L. Uhlfelder, *De proprietate sermonum vel rerum* (Rome: 1954).

18 On Isidore's authorship of the *Inter Deum* see the recent edition by María Adelaida Andrés Sanz, *Isidori episcopi Hispalensis Liber differentiarum* [*II*], CCSL 111A (Turnhout: 2006), 13*–16*. On the authorship of the *Inter caelum* see Carmen Codoñer, "La conception

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Braulio associates, under the same title, the two Isidorian texts by addressing their common characteristics. As a result, the first editors of Isidore's *Differentiae* presented the *Inter caelum* and the *Inter Deum* as books 1 and 2. This is precisely what we find, for instance, in Juan Grial's edition (Madrid: 1599) and in the more recent edition by Faustino Arévalo (Rome: 1802) that becomes *vulgata* thanks to its reprinting in the *Patrologia Latina*.[19] However, despite the common elements that might lead us to see the two texts as complementary, there are a number of elements which lead us to believe that Isidore conceived these two texts as separate entities. The prologue at the beginning of the *Inter caelum* serves exclusively as presentation of this text, as it does not reflect the character of the *Inter Deum*, nor does it refer in any way to this portion of the text. The contents, the structure of each chapter and the work as a whole, as well as the objectives, are different in each text. We also find that the manuscript transmission is not the same: from the more than 120 known handwritten copies of the *Inter Deum* and the 24 of the *Inter caelum*, only 13 transmit both texts, and not always next to each other.[20]

We do not know which treatise Isidore wrote first, if at any point he had the intention of considering both texts as parts of the same work, or if he produced some manuscript with both texts copied together. What we can agree on with certainty is that the two brief treatises came about during Isidore's first creative period and that their composition should be situated around the year 600.[21] The more grammatical and scholarly character of the *Inter caelum* (with greater attention given to the method of its composition) as opposed to the highly doctrinal and elaborate *Inter Deum*, and the inclusion of a specific

de *Differentia* dans le recueil *Inter aptum* d'Isidore de Séville," *Revue de Philologie* 60 (1986), 187–90.

19 The same occurs in the *editio princeps* by Marguerin de la Bigne (Paris: 1580) and in the editions by Jacques du Breul (Paris: 1601 and Cologne: 1617), although here the *Inter polliceri* substitutes for the *Inter caelum*.

20 In this way, for instance, the most ancient codex that contains both texts, Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, lat. 2994A (s. IX), transmits the first one in fols 73v–133v and the second in fols 141r–186v. In the common manuscript tradition, the first book is sometimes the *Inter caelum* and others the *Inter Deum.* See María Adelaida Andrés Sanz, "Isidorus Hispalensis ep., *De differentiis libri duo*," in *La trasmissione dei testi latini del Medioevo. Mediaeval Latin Texts and their Transmission*, vol. 2, eds. Paolo Chiesa and Lucia Castaldi (Florence: 2005), 307–22.

21 See José Carlos Martín, *La "Renotatio librorum domini Isidori" de Braulio de Zaragoza (†651)* (Logroño: 2002), 55–84, and Andrés Sanz, ed., *Isidori episcopi Hispalensis Liber differentiarum* [II], 22*–26*.

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prologue in the first one (in which both intention and method were explained) and not in the second,[22] lead us to speculate that the *Inter caelum* came first.

Just as Isidore himself defines it in the prologue to the *Inter caelum*[23] and in the corresponding chapter of the *Etymologiae* mentioned above (1.31), the *differentia* is the grammatical procedure seeking to explain with precision what distinguishes two words or expressions that are similar in meaning or form. It is therefore a lexicographical method which has as its objective the correction and the proper use of vocabulary, thus eliminating possible ambiguities and confusion between synonymous or homonymous terms. The usual outline contains the following elements: the introductory syntagma *inter X et Y* (sometimes another unit is added), sometimes a verbal structure that means "to differentiate" (*ita distinguitur*, *sic discernitur*, *hoc distare solet*, *hoc interest*, etc.), the definition tackling the specific characteristics of each term.[24]

We do not know of an earlier manual independently dedicated to the *differentia* which could have served Isidore as an immediate model. We know that, since antiquity, the *differentia* was included in manuals of rhetoric as a useful mechanism for the formulation of arguments. It was possible to see it appear sporadically in other works as a creative locus, also in grammatical texts. Examples can be found in grammars since the time of Varro (116–27 B.C.), although they abound especially from the 4th century A.D.[25] Isidore himself

22 The lack of a specific prologue in the *Inter Deum* resulted in the incorporation of another prologue known as *Nonnulli norunt* in a branch of the textual tradition; this probably took place in the 12th century; see María Adelaida Andrés Sanz, "El prólogo *Nonnulli norunt* en copias tardías del *Liber differentiarum* [*II*]," in *'Munus quaesitum meritis'. Homenaje a Carmen Codoñer*, eds. Gregorio Hinojo Andrés and José Carlos Fernández Corte (Salamanca: 2006), 61–69.

23 Isidore expressly points out that the value of each word comes mainly from its *origo*, in other words, through its "etymology"; by this method he establishes a relationship between the *differentia* and the *etymologia*. On the relationship between the two grammatical categories and the works they inspired in Isidore, see Carmen Codoñer, "*Differentia* y *etymologia*, dos modos de aproximación a la realidad," in *De Tertullien aux Mozarabes. Mélanges offerts à Jacques Fontaine*, eds. Louis Holtz and Jean-Claude Fredouille, vol. 2 (Paris: 1992), 19–30.

24 A detailed analysis of the formal outlines of the *Inter caelum* can be seen in Isabel Velázquez, *Latine dicitur, vulgo vocant. Aspectos de la lengua escrita y hablada en las obras gramaticales de Isidoro de Sevilla* (Logroño: 2003), 96–100 (119–25 for the *Inter Deum*), and Andrés Sanz, *Isidori episcopi Hispalensis Liber differentiarum* [*II*], 30*–41*.

25 Among the vast bibliography on the history of the genre of the *differentia*, refer to Carmen Codoñer, "Les plus anciennes compilations de *Differentiae*: formation et évolution d'un genre littéraire grammatical," *Revue de Philologie* 59 (1985), 201–19; Adriana della Casa, "Le

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declares in the prologue of the *Inter caelum* that his main purpose was to compile the differences found among his readings, without denying personal authorship in some cases: "For the first time Cato wrote on *differentiae* among the Roman people; following his example I composed some *differentiae* and extracted other ones from *auctores'* works and compiled them to delight you, the reader."[26] Perhaps we should ascribe to Isidore a leading role both in considering the *differentia* an integral part of grammatical instruction and in having originality in elaborating specific autonomous manuals.

The sources Isidore employed to compose his *Inter caelum* are mainly grammatical works written by some of the authors of late antiquity.[27] The most abundant coincidences (approximately a hundred or so entries) are with Servius's commentaries on the poems of Virgil. Some variations, noteworthy because of their similarities in many cases with the text from the so-called *Servius auctus*, suggest that Isidore also utilized Aelius Donatus's commentaries on Virgil, which have been lost (there are also several coincidences with the commentaries of Donatus on the comedies of Terence). A great number of entries (56 and 19, respectively) present literal or almost literal correlations with passages from the treatises *De orthographia* by Agroetius and (Ps.-)Caper. There are also many parallelisms (in some 20 entries) with the work *De compendiosa doctrina* written by the African grammarian Nonius Marcellus, especially with his fifth book dedicated precisely to *De differentiis similium significationum*, but the discrepancies in some citations and parts of the definition allow us to speculate that there was a common model rather than direct use of Nonius's work. Nor can we establish with certainty a direct use of Charisius's grammatical treatise because of the coincidences in 20 or so entries.[28] It is more certain

Differentiae verborum e i loro autori," *Civiltà Classica e Cristiana* 13 (1992), 47–62; Ana Isabel Magallón García, *La tradición gramatical de "differentia" y "etymologia" hasta Isidoro de Sevilla* (Zaragoza: 1996).

26 "De his apud Latinos Cato primus scripsit, ad cuius exemplum ipse paucissimas partim edidi, partim ex auctorum libris depromsi tibique, lector, pro delectatione notavi", Carmen Codoñer, ed., *Isidorus Hispalensis. De differentiis I* (Paris: 1992), 84.

27 On the sources of the *Inter caelum*, see the specific chapter in Codoñer, *Isidorus Hispalensis. De differentiis I*, 27–42; there is also more information in the explanatory notes on each entry, 302–412. Some specific examples are offered by Magallón García, *La tradición gramatical*, 239–44, and Jacques Elfassi, "Quelques sources non repérées du premier livre des *Différences* et des *Étymologies* d'Isidore de Séville, ou comment deux œuvres s'éclairent mutuellement," *Voces* 22 (2011), 25–38.

28 Within a vast production of grammatical texts, it is often difficult to establish concrete dependencies and intermediaries; it is these which probably have produced the coincidences and parallelisms we find here with other grammatical authors, such as Varro, Quintilianus, Aulus Gellius, Probus, Marius Victorinus, and Placidus.

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that the writings of Christian authors were utilized, given that Isidore states that it is necessary to draw from both Pagan and Christian authors, even in a work that is eminently grammatical. These authors are mainly Jerome (15 parallelisms) and Augustine (around 40 parallelisms).[29] It is worth noting that Isidore transcribes Jerome word for word, whereas he very seldom copies directly from the work of Augustine; he elaborates and adapts the text of the bishop of Hippo, as if indicating a greater familiarity with and assimilation of the works. The Bible also influences the work necessarily, and its use becomes more evident and direct in 11 entries.

Another important aspect is the direct citations used as explanatory examples. Almost all these citations are taken from classical authors: Afranius (4 citations), Ennius (1), Horace (1), Juvenal (1), Livy (1), Lucilius (1), Pacuvius (2), Plautus (3), Sallustius (4), Terence (3), and, above all, Cicero (12) and Virgil (18). Only 3 citations are taken from these Christian authors: Augustine, Jerome, and Tertullian. It is almost certain that the classical citations derive from intermediary sources, whereas the Christian ones were taken directly by Isidore himself. It is evident that even here Isidore wished to complement classical and Christian conventions, but his respect for the classical tradition is especially manifest in his grammatical work.

In the aforementioned edition by Arévalo (Rome: 1802) the *Inter caelum* featured 610 entries in alphabetical order from the *Inter aptum et utile*. The most recent editor of the text has demonstrated[30] that there were only 482 entries originally and that these were organized in thematic groups in which the criterion for the type of word (nouns, adjectives, pronouns, verbs, adverbs, prepositions, conjunctions, interjections) or the criterion for formative elements of words (prefixes or suffixes) is taken into account. It is natural that a work with such a practical and open character be subjected, from the very beginning, to new additions of entries as well as to the process of alphabetization.

29 The works by Augustine which were probably utilized are: *De animae quantitate*, *De civitate Dei*, *De doctrina christiana*, *De Genesi ad litteram*, *De libero arbitrio*, *De musica*, *De ordine*, *De Trinitate*, *De vera religione*, *Epistulae*, *Enarrationes in Psalmos*, *Sermones*, *Soliloquia*. The works by Jerome are: *Epistulae*, *In Danielem*, *In epistulam ad Ephesios*, *In epistulam ad Galatas*, *In epistulam ad Titum*, *In Matthaeum*. There are also some coincidences with the works by Hilarius, Cassiodorus, and Gregory the Great.

30 Carmen Codoñer, "Historia del texto del libro I de las *Differentiae* de Isidoro de Sevilla," *Revue d'Histoire des Textes* 14 (1984), 77–79. A classification of the entries by semantic values can be seen in Magallón García, *La tradición gramatical*, 247–60; Velázquez, *Latine dicitur*, 69–95, offers an analysis of the different procedures Isidore utilized to establish the differences and organize the different entries.

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The *Inter Deum*, often known as book 2 of *De differentiis*, is briefer than the previous text, and the most recent edition is organized into only 41 chapters. These chapters are not structured as homogenously as the entries of the *Inter caelum* because, as we have mentioned, the content and objectives are clearly different. In the *Inter Deum* Isidore also utilizes the composite procedure of the genre of *differentia*, formerly explained, to introduce and structure the contents. However, now the main interest is not exclusively grammatical, nor is it the metalinguistic reflection on similar terms that must be clearly distinguished; the main interest is inherent in the referential content, in the detailed explanation of the referents behind the terms serving as an introduction to each theme. Beneath a formal frame, typical of grammatical differences, there is an anthropological and theological reflection on God and the Trinity, on the creation of the world and the creatures that inhabit it, and on humans in all their different aspects. The differences between the two treatises are reflected in the names attributed to them by the tradition: the title *De differentiis verborum* ("On the differences between words") was already given to the *Inter caelum* in a number of the medieval manuscripts; the *Inter Deum* has received names related to its doctrinal content, such as *Differentiae de divinitate* ("Differences on the divinity"), *Differentiae spiritales* ("Spiritual differences"), *Differentiae theologicae* ("Theological differences"), or the more widespread title in modern times for having been utilized in the aforementioned edition by Arévalo (Rome: 1802), *Differentiae rerum* ("Differences of things").

The sources of the *Inter Deum* are almost exclusively Patristic.[31] Augustine continues to be the most cited author in the work. The *Moralia in Job* by Gregory the Great also leaves an important imprint. Other authors serve as support for the composition of some chapters: Lactancius, Gregory of Elvira, Gaudentius, Jerome, Cassian, and Fulgentius.[32] Of course, the Scriptures are more evident here: there are 44 citations or direct allusions referring back to 20 different books from the biblical text. Nevertheless, there are also sporadic uses of classical texts (probably also through intermediaries) by Ennius (1 citation) and Cicero (3). In this more theological treatise Isidore wishes to record his

31 See the corresponding chapter in Andrés Sanz, *Isidori episcopi Hispalensis Liber differentiarum* [II], 53*–64*.

32 Besides the *Moralia,* the texts that most influenced the *Inter Deum* are: *De civitate Dei*, *Confessiones*, *De consensu Evangelistarum*, *De Genesi ad litteram*, *De ordine*, and *De Trinitate* by Augustine; *Divinae institutiones* and *De opificio Dei* by Lactantius; *De fide* by Gregory of Elvira; *Tractatus* by Gaudentius; *Contra Iohannem*, *In epistulam ad Ephesios*, and *In epistulam ad Galatas* of Jerome; *Conlationes* by Cassian; and *De veritate praedistinationis*, *Epistulae*, and *De Trinitate* by Fulgentius.

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scholarly character and continue to play with the combination between what is Christian and what is pagan.

The *Inter Deum* was also subject to manipulation after Isidore. Still on Iberian soil and early on, some brief complementary phrases were added and words were changed; yet the linguistic characteristics suggest that Isidore was not responsible. Some copies of this revised text were found in the south of Gallia and in Northern Italy, and in the latter it was subjected to further, more significant, modifications: the alterations of some paragraphs, the elimination of others, and, above all, the addition of some new ones inspired by other works by Isidore, such as the *Sententiae* or the *Etymologiae*, or taken from the same sources that Isidore himself utilized.[33] The branch of transmission within which these major alterations were done, whose common antecedent is denoted by the editor as ψ, is the one transmitting both treatises on *De differentiis* by Isidore together, and is also responsible for some of the most important modifications in the *Inter caelum*.

The more theological, doctrinal, and even more encyclopaedic character of the *Inter Deum* fostered a greater dissemination of this work. As we have already mentioned, we know more than 120 manuscripts maintaining this brief treatise, of which 40 were written before the 11th century. Of the *Inter caelum*, however, we know of 24 codices, and only 5 of these codices were compiled before the 11th century. This last treatise circulated as a scholarly work of reference mainly associated with—besides other Isidorian writings—grammatical texts, primarily dealing with lexicon; it attracted special attention in Renaissance Italy, where scholars were very interested in the genre of the *Differentiae*. The testimonies of the *Inter caelum* that remain allow us to define two main textual families:[34] one (known as φ) is situated in Gaul and organized by themes; another (referred to as χ) transmits the version in alphabetical order with a greater number of additions and derives from Italy or the south of France. This last family coincides in part, as I have already mentioned, with the branch ψ of the tradition of the *Inter Deum*.

We can establish four other main branches for the *Inter Deum* (γ, ζ, λ, ρ), which transmit a text without the more extensive additions typical of the family ψ. Branch γ must be situated in central and northern France; branch ρ originates in some location in Switzerland connected to the British Isles; family λ is composed of offshoots disseminated throughout all Europe, but located above

33 See Andrés Sanz, "Isidorus Hispalensis ep., *De differentiis libri duo*," 313–18; Andrés Sanz, *Isidori episcopi Hispalensis Liber differentiarum* [*II*], 258*–272*.

34 See Codoñer, "Historia del texto," 91–93; Codoñer, *Isidorus Hispalensis. De differentiis I*, 77–79, and Andrés Sanz, "Isidorus Hispalensis ep., *De differentiis libri duo*," 310–12.

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all in Switzerland and around Lyon; family ζ is clearly related to Irish and Anglo-Saxon centres, both in the British Isles and on the continent.[35] The citations of the work testify to an important circulation within Visigothic and Mozarabic Hispania; we find quotations in the *Apologeticum fidei* (*c*.686) by Julian of Toledo. Citations from it are also found in the *acta* of the Fifteenth Council of Toledo (a. 688), the *Epistula episcoporum Hispaniae* (*c*.792) by Elipandus of Toledo, the *Epistulae* (5.9.4) by Albarus of Cordoba (*c*.800-*c*.863), and the text also known as *Apologeticum fidei* (*c*.880) by Samson of Cordoba. In all these texts the *Inter Deum* is employed as a dogmatic authority. This interest was, indubitably, a priority throughout the whole history of its dissemination, but all the more so during the late Middle Ages.[36] For this reason the *Inter Deum* circulated with doctrinal and exegetical texts, mainly of Trinitarian content. However, its hybrid character is also evident during the most ancient phase of its reception, and for this reason, in the codices dating before the 12th century the treatise appears connected with relative regularity with other grammatical and lexicographical texts.

4 The *Synonyma*

Isidore utilizes yet another grammatical procedure and presentation to create his *Synonyma*, as the author himself declares in the introduction of the work (1.3):[37] "Recently a booklet called *Synonyma* came to my hands; its form persuaded my mind to compose a lament for myself or for wretched people." It is

35 It is also probable that there was an early dissemination of the *Inter caelum* throughout the British Isles, which would explain its influence on some of the biblical commentaries of the school of Canterbury at the time of Theodore and Adrian (see Michael Lapidge, *The Anglo-Saxon Library* [Oxford: 2006], 177), or its use by the grammarian Malsachanus (see Bengt Löfstedt, *Der Hibernolateinische Grammatiker Malsachanus* [Uppsala: 1965], 50–51 and 250). See also Marina Smyth, "Isidorian Texts in Seventh-Century Ireland," in *Isidore of Seville and his Reception in the Early Middle Ages. Transmitting and Transforming Knowledge*, eds. Andrew Fear and Jamie Wood (Amsterdam: 2016), 112–30, and the chapter by Martin J. Ryan in this volume.

36 See María Adelaida Andrés Sanz, "Vers une typologie de la réception tardo-médiévale de l'*Inter Deum* (CPL 1202)," *Cahiers de Recherches Médiévales* 16 (2008), 159–73; María Adelaida Andrés Sanz, "Transmisión y recepción altomedieval de las *Differentiae* isidorianas: nuevos apuntes. El *De praedestinatione* de Ratramno de Corbie," in Mesa Sanz, *Latinidad medieval hispánica*, 85–94. See also the chapters by Mark Tizzoni, Sinéad O'Sullivan, and Winston Black in this volume.

37 "Venit nuper ad manus meas quaedam scedula, quam Sinonimam dicunt, cuius formula persuasit animo quoddam lamentum mihi vel miseris condere," Jacques Elfassi, ed., *Isidori Hispalensis episcopi Synonyma*, CCSL 111B (Turnhout: 2009), 5.

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evident that Isidore has within his reach and uses as a source of inspiration some text in which there were lists of synonymic phrases. These types of texts were used and prepared in the grammar and rhetorical schools of late antiquity in order to train students in *copia* and *varietas verborum*, in other words, in the richness and elegance of the vocabulary necessary for an appropriate and elegant use of language. Catalogues compiling simple lists of synonyms (as in the style of the *Synonyma Ciceronis*), or more complete treatises in which synonymy is presented in more complex syntactical structures (phrases or sentences) were useful resources both in grammar and rhetorical schools and enjoyed great popularity and dissemination during late antiquity and early Middle Ages.[38] Isidore's main model is, without a doubt, some brief treatise of this second sort, but we do not know which one it could have been. We have the *Glossulae multifariae idem significantes*, which are included in the fifth book of the *Ars grammatica* by Charisius, and we know, through the *Collectaneum miscellaneum* by Sedulius Scottus, that there exists a catalogue entitled *Glossa consentanea*. Both texts present similarities with Isidore's work, but perhaps we should rather think about similar outlines whose common antecedents or relationships cannot be defined precisely at this time.[39]

Furthermore, Isidore follows a model of grammatical and rhetorical exercises which through syntactical structures of similar meaning (playing with parallelisms or variations) facilitate the study of synonyms and antonyms, the different word classes, types of verb complements and structures, and types of sentences.[40] Nevertheless, behind this grammatical form we also find the main objective, which is to create a single spiritual and moral treatise. The work is organized in two books that differ both in content and tone. In the first one, more lyrical, man as sinner laments his suffering, and reason invites him to sincerely examine his conscience and repent of his faults. In the second book, more normative, reason offers the necessary guidelines for that man who has repented and is willing to live a virtuous life. Isidore already refers to this content in the aforementioned prologue to the work,[41] and copyists of manuscripts

38 Isidore associates synonymy with the school for grammarians, when in book 1 of the *Etymologiae* he addresses the *nomina synonyma* (1.7.14) or, as it has been said, he includes among the grammatical categories the *glossa* (1.30), understood as a play on synonyms. Yet he also recognizes the importance and continuity of synonymy in the rhetor's school, as he explains it as part of rhetorical figures (*Etymologiae* 2.21.6).

39 See Jacques Elfassi, "Genèse et originalité du style synonymique dans les *Synonyma* d'Isidore de Séville," *Revue des Études Latines* 83 (2005), 226–33.

40 An analysis of the formal procedures is found in Velázquez, *Latine dicitur*, 129–34.

41 I am referring to the original prologue by Isidore (1.3–4, Elfassi, *Isidori Hispalensis episcopi Synonyma*). Another prologue (1.1–2, Elfassi, *Isidori Hispalensis episcopi Synonyma*),

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highlight it by adding explanatory subtitles, such as *De virtutibus, vitiis et moribus* ("On virtues, vices, and good conduct"), *Formula honestae vitae* ("Rules for a noble life"), *De miseria humanae conditionis* ("On the misery of the human condition"), *De contemptu mundi* ("On contempt for the world"), *De lamentatione animae peccatricis* ("On the lamentations of the sinner's soul"), etc.[42]

These complements to the title do not appear, however, in the oldest manuscript tradition and cannot be attributed to Isidore. The only two titles documented in the oldest codices are *Synonyma* and *Liber soliloquiorum*. The first, which is the one we use to refer to the work nowadays, was offered by the family of textual transmission Λ. It is without question the original title, as Isidore himself utilizes it in his correspondence with Braulio of Zaragoza (*Epistula* B). Braulio also uses it in his *Renotatio*, and it also appears in the *De viris illustribus* by Ildefonsus of Toledo. The second title is offered by family Φ, and it is justified because the text is constructed as a personal reflection of a man sustaining an internal dialogue with reason, and it is probable that it can also be attributed to Isidore.[43]

The Patristic sources are, indeed, the most widely used in the *Synonyma*, and the reference authors are the same ones we have already seen with the two books of the *Differentiae*. The *Moralia in Job* by Gregory the Great is the most utilized work. Many loan words are taken, above all in the second book, from Ambrose of Milan's *De officiis*. We have evidence of the use of other authors in specific chapters: Cyprian (*Ad Donatum*, *De bono patientiae*, *De lapsis*, *De zelo et livore*, *Epistulae*), Lactantius (*Divinae institutiones*), Cassian (*Collationes*), Arnobius the Younger (*Ad Gregoriam*), Cassiodorus (*Expositio Psalmorum*), and Leander of Seville (*De institutione virginum*). Jerome and Augustine are present

which was clearly not written by Isidore, was added during the 8th century (it was probably written outside the Iberian Peninsula and is exclusively associated with manuscript family Φ); its author wanted to highlight Isidore's authorship and offer a complete summary of the moral and ascetic content of the two books.

42 The last subtitle appears in the codex El Escorial, Real Biblioteca del Monasterio de San Lorenzo, f.IV.8 (s. XV), which was utilized, among other manuscripts, by Juan de Mariana in the edition of Juan Grial (Madrid: 1599). This subtitle was subsequently employed by Faustino Arévalo in his edition (Rome: 1802); this edition became the referent in modern times thanks to its reprinting in the PL (83, 825–68).

43 Isidore includes soliloquy besides synonymy in the rhetorical devices, as the translation of the Greek term *peusis* (*Etymologiae* 2.21.47). Although there is no evidence that Isidore had read and used the *Soliloquia* by Augustine with the same intensity as other works by the bishop of Hippo, and although the content and the style of the Augustinian treatise and those of Isidore are very different, the coincidence in the title and dialogic style between man and reason does not seem arbitrary. Jacobus de Gruytrode, in his incunable edition (Antwerp: 1487), wanted to highlight in the title the dialogical form of the text: *Dyalogus sive Synonima Ysidori de homine et ratione*.

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throughout the entire text.[44] The Bible is cited frequently: in the first book the texts of Job and the prophet Jeremiah stand out, corresponding to the first part's lyricism and tone of lamentation; in the second book the wisdom texts predominate, coinciding with its normative and gnomic tone. In both books we find numerous citations of the Psalms, very appropriate, again, for a normative, lyrical, synonymic, and repetitive style.

We have already established that Isidore probably had available some manual of synonymic exercises similar to that known as the *Glossa consentanea*. To this source we probably owe all or almost all citations of classical authors that we find in the *Synonyma* conferring on the text its character of an academic treatise within the classical tradition. Naturally, the most employed work is the *Tusculanae Disputationes* by Cicero (14 citations). There are also citations from Cicero's *De oratore* and from the *Paradoxa Stoicorum*, as well as from the *Breviarium* of Eutropius, the *Carmina* of Horace, the *Saturae* of Juvenal, fragments of the poet Marcius, the *Epigrammata* of Martial, the *Metamorphoses* of Ovid, the *Bacchides* and the *Captivi* of Plautus, the *Institutio oratoria* of Quintilian, the *Adelphoe*, the *Andria* and the *Phormio* of Terence, and Virgil's *Aeneid*.

The two aforementioned families of textual transmission correspond with two different stages of composition. Besides the different titles, numerous and very significant textual variants allow us to appreciate clearly that we are dealing with deliberate and independent corrections in several parts of the text. The harmony among the style and sources of specific passages of each composition indicates that both versions belong to the same author, Isidore. The hypothesis brought forward by the treatise's editor to explain this singularity is very coherent and convincing:[45] between the years 619 and 631 Isidore sent

44 Other works by Gregory the Great are: *Homiliae in Ezechielem* and *Regula pastoralis*. From Ambrose there are also: *De Cain et Abel*, *De Iacob et vita beata*, *De Nabuthae*, and *Hexameron*. There are several works by Jerome: *Contra Iohannem*, *Epistulae*, *In Amos*, *In epistulam ad Galatas*, *In Ezechielem*, *In Ionam*, *In Matthaeum*, and mainly *In Ecclesiasten*. The works by Augustine are numerous: *Confessiones*, *Contra mendacium*, *Contra Priscillanistas et Origenistas*, *De baptismo*, *De continentia*, *De excidio urbis Romae*, *De moribus*, *De quantitate animae*, *De sermone Domini in monte*, *De Trinitate*, *Enarrationes in Psalmos*, *Enchiridion*, *Epistulae*, and *Sermones*. A brief presentation of the sources is found in Elfassi, *Isidori Hispalensis episcopi Synonyma*, XVI–XXII.

45 See Elfassi, *Isidori Hispalensis episcopi Synonyma*, LVIII–LXV and CVIII–CXIII. The hypothesis had already been presented by Jacques Elfassi, "Isidorus Hispalensis ep., *Synonyma*," in *La trasmissione dei testi latini del Medioevo. Mediaeval Latin Texts and their Transmission*, vol. 1, eds. Paolo Chiesa and Lucia Castaldi (Florence: 2004), 218–26, and also in "Les deux recensions des *Synonyma*," in *L'édition critique des œuvres d'Isidore de Séville. Les recensions multiples*, eds. María Adelaida Andrés Sanz, Jacques Elfassi, and José Carlos Martín (Paris: 2008), 153–84. On another possible interpretation see Jacques Elfassi, "Une

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Braulio, at this point archdeacon in Zaragoza, a copy of the *Synonyma*, whose first draft had been in preparation since 610.[46] The copy that Braulio received or another related copy led to the origin of the family Λ, whose earliest dissemination is documented in the British Isles and in centres on the continent related to the Insular mission.[47] Isidore reproduced, based on the first rough copy (perhaps because he was left without a copy of the text he sent to Zaragoza), a second version, which is preserved in family Φ, disseminated in earlier times mainly within France.

The novel combination of a useful and ascetic spiritual guide with a didactic grammatical form later termed *stilus Isidorianus* ("Isidorian style") transformed the *Synonyma* into a highly successful work throughout the Middle Ages. There are more than 500 complete manuscripts and more than 80 codices with important extracts from the work dating before the year 1400; some 40 of these copies date to the 7th, 8th, and 9th centuries. Let us add to this list the existence of translations into old English and old French, each one preserved in two medieval codices, and above all, some centos based on the *Synonyma* that were produced between the 10th and 14th centuries and which were disseminated independently, especially in the 14th and 15th centuries. Among these centos it is worth mentioning: the *Collectum* preserved in at least 145 manuscripts, the *De norma vivendi* preserved in at least 84 manuscripts, the *Monita* preserved in at least 40 codices, and the *Tractatus deflentis hominis et ammonentis rationis* preserved in at least 38 codices.[48]

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nouvelle hypothèse sur les deux recensions des *Synonyma* d'Isidore de Séville: quelques remarques critiques," *Archivum Latinitatis Medii Aevi* 69 (2011), 197–201.

46 I use the dates proposed by José Antonio de Aldama, "Indicaciones sobre la cronología de las obras de S. Isidoro," in *Miscellanea Isidoriana. Homenaje a S. Isidoro de Sevilla en el XIII centenario de su muerte* (Rome: 1936), 66–67. In any case, it is not possible to determine with precision the date at which the *Synonyma* was written, as the only precise piece of information we do have tells us it was created after the year 595, the date at which the *Moralia in Job* by Gregory the Great arrived in Seville. On the date of the work and the arguments that can be employed see Martín, *Scripta de uita Isidori*, 231–33, and Elfassi, *Isidori Hispalensis episcopi Synonyma*, XI–XVI.

47 On the dissemination of the *Synonyma* in the British Isles we cannot leave out the work by Claudia Di Sciacca, *Finding the Right Words: Isidore's Synonyma in Anglo-Saxon England* (Toronto: 2008), which at 16–36 includes a brief presentation on the structure, the style, and the sources of this treatise. See also Claudia Di Sciacca, "Isidore of Seville in Anglo-Saxon England. The *Synonyma* as a Source of Felix's *Vita S. Gutlaci*," in *Isidore of Seville and his Reception in the Early Middle Ages. Transmitting and Transforming Knowledge*, eds. Andrew Fear and Jamie Wood (Amsterdam: 2016), 131–57, and the chapter by Martin J. Ryan in this volume.

48 On the subsequent popularity of the *Synonyma*, see, besides the works by Di Sciacca previously cited, some of the writings by Jacques Elfassi: "Isidorus Hispalensis ep., *Synonyma*,"

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Although later authors who imitated the *Synonyma* prove that this work served as a model of grammatical teaching and, above all, exercises in style, and for this reason was utilized in grammar schools throughout medieval Europe,[49] its manuscript transmission and reception suggest that the work was seen mainly as a moral and ascetic text in the Middle Ages, as Isidore had probably designed it.[50] The great majority of manuscripts transmitting the work include it with other texts of theological and doctrinal content, especially ascetic, moral, and dogmatic treatises. It is also significant that in codices incorporating other elements of the Isidorian *corpus,* the *Synonyma* are generally associated with the *Sententiae* and the *Inter Deum* (the second book of the *Differentiae*). Very seldom do the *Synonyma* accompany any other grammatical text. The most representative example is the third part of a codex in Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Reg. Lat. 310 (s. IX^{in}): beside the *Synonyma* we find the glossary *Abavus*, the *Inter polliceri*, the *Inter Deum*, and the dictionary or lexical catalogue which is book 10 of the *Etymologiae*.

5 Conclusion

Isidore wished to present a complete education in all branches of learning to his intended audience, as is shown by his wide and varied writings, above all the *Etymologiae*. Grammar formed the indispensable foundation of this education, as a sound understanding of language was the only path, as he saw it, to any further area of study. Above all, therefore, Isidore wrote as a *grammaticus* and, as we have seen, presents in the first book of the *Etymologiae* a detailed resumé of necessary grammatical learning. This programme is linked to the

224–25; "Trois aspects inattendus de la postérité des *Synonyma* d'Isidore de Séville: les prières, les textes hagiographiques et les collections canoniques," *Revue d'Histoire des Textes* n.s. 1 (2006), 109–52; "Los centones de los *Synonyma* de Isidoro de Sevilla," in *Actas do IV Congresso Internacional de Latim Medieval Hispânico*, eds. Aires A. Nascimento and Paulo F. Alberto (Lisbon: 2006), 393–401; "La réception des *Synonyma* d'Isidore de Séville aux XIVe–XVIe siècles: les raisons d'un succès exceptionnel," *Cahiers de Recherches Médiévales* 16 (2008), 107–18; "Les *Synonyma* d'Isidore de Séville dans le Moyen Âge hispanique," in Codoñer and Farmhouse Alberto, *Wisigothica*, 405–19.

49 A good example is found in the *Colloquia* by the Anglo-Saxon scholar Ælfric Bata (*c.*1000); see Di Sciacca, *Finding the Right Words*, 164–75.

50 It is true that in the prologue Isidore insists mainly on this moral and ascetic content, but it is also true that he wished to utilize a title for his work that could highlight its grammatical structure. A classic work on this aspect is the one by Jacques Fontaine, "Isidore de Séville auteur 'ascetique': les énigmes des *Synonyma*," *Studi Medievali* 6 (1965), 163–95. This work is complemented by Jacques Elfassi, "Les *Synonyma* d'Isidore de Séville: un manuel de grammaire ou de morale? La réception médiévale de l'œuvre," *Revue d'Études Augustiniennes et Patristiques* 52 (2006), 167–98.

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tradition associated with Aelius Donatus, which had become the principal model for schools in late antiquity and the high Middle Ages. To it were added other elements which were of especial concern to schools in Visigothic Iberia: orthography, metre, and, above all, the acquisition of a large vocabulary. This particular focus on commanding a knowledge of a wide variety of words and their precise meanings is what led Isidore to pay special attention to lexical differences, synonyms, and etymology, and writing specific works focussed on these topics. As a result, his *Differentiae*, *Synonyma*, and *Etymologiae*, while having dogmatic, technical, or academic content, are also *thesauri* of vocabulary, guides to writing, and therefore works of grammar. It is thanks to these works that Isidore came to be regarded as the master of grammar in the centuries following his death and that his works frequently circulated in medieval codices as parts of compilations dealing with grammar.

Translated by Geraldine Barandiarán-Muñoz

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CHAPTER 9

Isidore of Seville and the *Etymologies*

Jacques Elfassi

1 Introduction

The *Etymologies* are considered Isidore's masterwork: his longest work, the one that, as far as we know, most occupied the bishop until his death; the one that, along with the *Sententiae* and the *Synonyma*, was the most appreciated in the Middle Ages; the one that has been the most studied in our time; the one responsible for Isidore's recent designation as Patron Saint of the Internet. And yet, much about the *Etymologies* remains unknown, although, as we shall see, great strides have been made in the past few years. Furthermore, recent research has also invited new questions. For example, we are no longer sure today that Isidore divided his encyclopedia into twenty books, nor even that some of these books were part of the project as conceived by its author. While covering the basic facts, it seemed to me important to touch on these new hypotheses and even to suggest a few paths for new research. This chapter is intended less as a declaration of the current "state of the question" than as a declaration of research in progress.

2 The Genesis of the Work

The surviving documents shedding light on the genesis of the *Etymologies* fall into two groups: the first consists of the oldest manuscripts; the second includes Isidore's correspondence and Braulio of Zaragoza's *Renotatio*.[1] Because these sources are often very difficult to interpret, they have given rise to many more hypotheses than certainties. The major facts conveyed by the oldest manuscripts are as follows:[2] first of all, certain witnesses contain a dedication

1 See Carmen Codoñer's brief but very clear presentation, "Problemas de transmisión en la primera parte de las *Etimologías*: algunas reflexiones," in *L'édition critique des œuvres d'Isidore de Séville. Les recensions multiples. Actes du colloque organisé à la Casa de Velázquez et à l'Université Rey Juan Carlos de Madrid (14–15 janvier 2002)*, eds. María Adelaida Andrés Sanz, Jacques Elfassi, and José Carlos Martín (Paris: 2008), 195–98.

2 Not only is the account below a mere sketch, but the reader should recall that extant manuscripts all bear some signs of contamination. For a discussion in greater depth, see the classic

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to King Sisebut (612–21); furthermore, in certain manuscripts, the first ten books (in the modern division into books) are divided into three books and there is a notable correlation between the copies that show signs of this division into three books and those dedicated to Sisebut. In all cases, in this first grouping of ten books, three (of the modern division into books) are problematic. Book 4 is missing from some manuscripts or appears in the second part of the *Etymologies*. Book 5 is sometimes in two parts (*De legibus* and *De temporibus*), and its final section (the chronicle in chapter 39) contains major variants. Some manuscripts contain only the second prologue of book 10. Although it involves going beyond the evidence of the manuscript tradition, it can also be noted that the contents of chapter 5.39 and of book 10 seem to confirm their heterogeneous character: chapter 5.39 is an abbreviated form of Isidore's *Chronicle*, and book 10 is a kind of dictionary which is the only part of the *Etymologies* to be classified alphabetically. Carmen Codoñer suggested that *Etym.* 5.39 might contain the marks of a smaller independent work later inserted into the *Etymologies*.[3] The same can be said for book 10.[4] Finally, we should mention that several rather long passages (for example, 1.34–37 and 2.21.3–48) are found in only a few manuscripts, which might indicate intentional reworkings (by Isidore or others).

Isidore's correspondence with Braulio of Zaragoza is a source of other kinds of information. In letter II, dated after 631,[5] Braulio asks Isidore for a copy of the *Etymologies*, which he has heard has been completed. In letter IV, sent to Isidore in 632–33, Braulio writes that there is already an incomplete version of the *Etymologies* circulating among many people, and he reminds Isidore that he had already asked him for a copy of the work seven years ago (that is to say, around 625–26). In letter V, from the same period, Isidore replies, sending a copy of his work and explaining that, due to ill health, he has not been able to correct any errors, and asking that his friend do so.

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article (still valid) by Marc Reydellet, "La diffusion des *Origines* d'Isidore de Séville au haut Moyen Âge," *Mélanges d'Archéologie et d'Histoire de l'École Française de Rome* 78 (1966), 383–437; and the more recent review by Carmen Codoñer, "Isidorus Hispalensis ep., *Etymologiae*," in *La trasmissione dei testi latini del Medioevo. Mediaeval Latin Texts and their Transmission*, vol. 2, eds.. Paolo Chiesa and Lucia Castaldi (Florence: 2005), 274–99.

3 Carmen Codoñer, "El 'De descriptione temporum' de las 'Etymologiae' (5,39) dentro de la transmisión manuscrita de la 'Chronica,'" *Filologia mediolatina* 20 (2013), 217–54.

4 See Carmen Codoñer, *Introducción al Libro X de las "Etymologiae": su lugar dentro de esta obra, su valor como diccionario* (Logroño: 2002), 46.

5 For the numbering and dating of Braulio's letters to Isidore, I follow the conclusions of Ruth Miguel Franco, "Introducción," in *Braulionis Caesaraugustani Epistulae et Isidori Hispalensis Epistulae ad Braulionem*, ed. Ruth Miguel Franco (with the collaboration of José Carlos Martín), CCSL 114B (Turnhout: 2018), 9*–56*.

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In his *Renotatio librorum domini Isidori*, Braulio explains that he has divided the *Etymologies* into books (*libri*), whereas Isidore had arranged them in "titles" (*tituli*). It is quite probable that the "titles" Braulio speaks of do not correspond to the present chapters, but it is not easy to know how these subdivisions were organized and whether such divisions may be reflected in the manuscripts.[6] However, the text of the *Renotatio* presents an even greater problem because it is unclear whether Braulio divided the encyclopedia into fifteen or twenty books. The oldest manuscripts of the *Renotatio* all speak of fifteen books, suggesting that the archetype of the manuscript tradition of the *Renotatio* had the number "fifteen." However, most experts believe that this fifteen should be corrected to twenty (that "xx" might turn into "xv" is easy to imagine), since the *Etymologies* are generally divided into twenty books.[7] Veronika von Büren has noted that the oldest manuscripts of the *Etymologies* in which the text is divided into twenty books (that is, where the division was not added later), are no earlier than the 9th century.[8] In other words, the division into twenty books is perhaps not as old as has often been thought. One problem that von Büren has not solved is that there is no known early copy in which the *Etymologies* are divided into fifteen books. She suggests that the fifteenth book's organization is present in those manuscripts that divide the first ten books into three parts and combine books 11 and 12 into one. Her view is that there were three books corresponding to the present books 1–3, 5–6, and 7–9; the present book 4 (*de medicina*), which was separate from these three units; the sections *De astronomia* of book 3 and *De temporibus* of book 5, which were each considered separate books; a book corresponding to the present books 11 and 12; and finally, eight books corresponding to each of books 13–20.[9]

6 The only scholar to have studied this question has changed her mind: Carmen Codoñer, "Los *tituli* en las *Etymologiae*. Aportaciones al estudio de la transmisión del texto," in *Actas. I Congreso Nacional de Latín Medieval* (*León, 1–4 Diciembre de 1993*), ed. Maurilio Pérez González (León: 1995), 29–46; and, more recently, her *Introducción al Libro X*, 20–25.

7 This was the opinion of the scholar responsible for a critical edition of the *Renotatio*: José Carlos Martín, *Scripta de uita Isidori Hispalensis episcopi*, CCSL 113B (Turnhout: 2006), 167–68. However, Martín thinks now that "xv" is not only the reading of the archetype, but also, probably, of the author: see José Carlos Martín, *Escritos medievales en honor del obispo Isidoro de Sevilla*, Corpus Christianorum in Translation 29 (Turnhout: 2017), 85.

8 Veronika von Büren, "La place du manuscrit Ambr. L 99 sup. dans la transmission des *Étymologies* d'Isidore de Séville," in *Nuove ricerche su codici in scrittura latina dell'Ambrosiana. Atti del Convegno* (*Milano, 6–7 ottobre 2005*), eds. Mirella Ferrari and Marco Navoni (Milan: 2007), 35–36.

9 Von Büren, "La place," 32–33. See also Veronika von Büren, "Les Étymologies de Paul Diacre? Le manuscrit Cava de' Tirreni, 2 (XXIII) et le *Liber Glossarum*," *Italia medioevale e umanistica* 53 (2012), 1, n. 1.

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Nevertheless, the case von Büren makes is not entirely convincing because the elements important in her view (uniting books 1–3, or separating the section *De astronomia* from book 3) are in fact attested in certain manuscripts, but there is no copy that includes all of these elements.

According to Marc Reydellet, "Braulio's division into twenty books is an incontrovertible truth."[10] On the other hand, von Büren believes that she has "demonstrated" the original division into fifteen books.[11] Given the current state of our knowledge, such peremptory affirmations should be avoided. The evidence of the oldest manuscripts of the *Renotatio* in favor of fifteen cannot be ignored, but neither can the ease with which "xv" can be mistaken for "xx," nor the fact that there is no extant manuscript of the *Etymologies* in fifteen books.

I have spent a lot of time on the problem of the division into fifteen or twenty books in order to show, by means of a specific example, how contradictory the documentation at our disposal can be, and how difficult it is to interpret. Reconstituting the phases of the construction of the *Etymologies* remains an extremely hypothetical undertaking. Let us nonetheless attempt a sketch of the history of the oldest text of the *Etymologies*.[12]

The earliest version is that dedicated to Sisebut, necessarily earlier than 621. We do not know what this "Sisebutian" version was like, but it may have included only the first nine books as we have them, divided into three parts: the liberal arts (present books 1–3), human law and divine law (book 5, perhaps without chapter 39, and book 6), and names of God and of the people (books 7–9). Book 10 was perhaps included as a kind of appendix.

Isidore, then, finished, revised, and rewrote that first version. This process of revision was probably progressive and relatively continuous in the 620s and at the beginning of the 630s. Around 633, he sent Braulio a version that he must have considered nearly definitive, although he advised that it still should be revised. We can identify some obvious signs of the unfinished state of the *Etymologies*, like empty or missing lemmas[13] or insertions in the manuscript

10 Reydellet, "La diffusion," 396.

11 Von Büren, "Les Étymologies," 1.

12 See Carmen Codoñer, "Fases en la edición de las *Etymologiae*, con especial referencia al libro X," *Euphrosyne* 22 (1994), 125–46; see also the very good presentation (with some new approaches) by Miguel Franco, "Introducción", 41*-56*.

13 For example, in book 4 alone: *Syringio* (8.22), *Similaria. Angistrum. Spatomele* (11.3), *Clistere* (11.4), *Cerotum. Calasticum. Marciatum* (12.11). To the best of my knowledge, the empty or missing entries in the *Etymologies* have never been studied. Ana-Isabel Magallón García, *La tradición gramatical de* differentia *y* etymologia *hasta Isidoro de Sevilla*

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announcing a biblical citation not in fact provided.[14] The repetitions that occur throughout the work are perhaps also reflections of its incomplete state, but it is difficult to be sure of this, since the *Etymologies* are an encyclopedia rather than a text to be read from start to finish, so such repetitions are not necessarily troubling.[15] In any case, it is impossible to know what the *Etymologies* would have looked like if Isidore had been able to complete them himself.

At Isidore's death in 636, the posthumous history of the *Etymologies* begins, and it too is not clear. Braulio tells us that the division into books was his own work, but did he also add other major corrections? The praise of Zaragoza in 15.1.66 has sometimes been attributed to him,[16] but nothing proves that it is his addition.[17] In any case, the most important problem is whether the "vulgate" version as we have it today corresponds to Braulio's version. That is the most widespread belief, but von Büren proposed new hypotheses. She suggests that the "vulgate" version we use today actually dates from the Carolingian period and was the result of the work of Theodulf of Orleans and his circle as they were elaborating the *Liber glossarum*.[18] According to her, only in the Carolingian period were the *Etymologies*, which Braulio had divided into fifteen books, arranged into twenty books; and only then were certain chapters added (e.g. chapters 1.34–37 and 2.21.3–48, two passages concerning rhetorical figures). Such conclusions have the merit of questioning well-established traditions, although more research is needed to develop such insights.[19]

(Zaragoza: 1996), 275, notes that the number of empty or missing entries increases in the last three books.

14 Isidore, *Etymologiae* 14.9.7: "Cocytus is an underworld place of which Job speaks thus" ("Iob ita loquitur"). The English translation used here is: Stephen A. Barney, Wendy J. Lewis, Jennifer A. Beach, and Oliver Berghof, *Isidore of Seville, The Etymologies* (Cambridge: 2006), 300. Barring exceptions, for the remainder of this chapter this translation is the source of most of the translated passages from the *Etymologies*.

15 See Ana-Isabel Magallón García, "El método de trabajo de Isidoro de Sevilla," *Veleia* 17 (2000), 277–78.

16 See Reydellet, "La diffusion," 416.

17 See Manuel C. Díaz y Díaz, "Introducción general," in José Oroz Reta and Manuel A. Marcos Casquero, *San Isidoro de Sevilla, Etimologías* (Madrid: 2004), 178–79.

18 Von Büren, "La place" and "Les Étymologies."

19 For example, it is hard to see where *T* (Madrid BN Vitr. 14.3) belongs in von Büren's stemma. See also a critique of von Büren's theory in Anne Grondeux, "Note sur la présence de l'*Hypomnesticon* pseudo-augustinien dans le *Liber glossarum*," *Dossiers d'HEL* 8 (2015), 71–74. Grondeux also proposes a very interesting hypothesis which, if it is verified, could shed new light on the genesis of the *Etymologiae*: according to her, the *Liber glossarum* could keep track of some preparatory dossiers of Isidore's encyclopedia.

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3 Structure and Contents

It is customary, whatever the nature of the work being analysed, to examine its structure. When the work in question is an encyclopedia, such a study is indispensable. This is not the place to attempt yet again to define the encyclopedia as a genre, but we can agree that it contains at least three characteristics: multidisciplinarity; exhaustivity (or at least the aim of being exhaustive); and systematic organization of knowledge.[20] Multidisciplinarity and the aim of exhaustivity are characteristics of the *Etymologies* stressed by Braulio in his *Renotatio*: "Overflowing with eloquence of various arts (*diuersarum artium*) with regard to nearly every point of them that ought to be known (*quaecumque fere scire debentur*)."[21] But encyclopedias aspire not merely to collect as broad a body of information as possible, they also seek to organize it. This leaves researchers the task of attempting to understand the logic, the worldview, behind this immense work.

In most medieval manuscripts, and in modern editions, the *Etymologies* are divided into twenty books. Of course, as the preceding section showed, this division is not necessarily to be attributed to Isidore himself, and it is not even clear that it can be traced to his first "editor," Braulio of Zaragoza. Nevertheless, the overall scheme, the division of subjects discussed and their order (the choice, for example of beginning with a book on grammar), can certainly be attributed to Isidore. From the historical point of view, it is an undeniable fact that almost all Isidore's readers have become acquainted with the work in the form in which we have it today, in twenty books. The contents of these twenty books are as follows: I grammar, II rhetoric, III mathematics, music, and astronomy, IV medicine, V law and chronology, VI Holy Writ and Church services, VII God, angels, and saints, VIII the Church and heresies, IX languages and social groups, X an alphabetical list of nouns and adjectives describing human nature and activities, XI humans and monsters, XII animals, XIII the world and its parts, XIV the earth, XV cities, XVI stones and metals, XVII agriculture, XVIII war and games, XIX ships, buildings, and clothing, XX food, drink, and utensils.

It is possible, starting from this basic structure, to perceive a kind of superstructure explaining the overarching organization of the *Etymologies*. The

20 The bibliography of encyclopedias as a genre is immense. Because it brings together contributions from a great variety of sources, I will mention here only the work of Jason König and Greg Woolf, eds., *Encyclopaedism from Antiquity to the Renaissance* (Cambridge: 2013), especially the contribution of Andrew H. Merrills, "Isidore's *Etymologies*: On Words and Things," 301–24.

21 Martín, *Scripta*, 204, l. 48–49, trans. Barney et al., 8.

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most frequent current scheme of analysis involves dividing the work into two parts: books 1–10 and books 11–20.[22] Two arguments are offered to justify this division. The first is historical: it is plausible, as we have seen earlier, that a first version of the *Etymologies* consisted only of the first ten books. The oldest manuscript tradition marks a clear break between the first ten books, whose division and order are very variable in the manuscript tradition, and the last ten, where the composition is much more stable.[23] Furthermore, several old manuscripts retain the marks of a separation between these two groupings. For example, the manuscript *Madrid BN Vitr. 14.3* (*T*), copied at the end of the 8th century, separates book 10 from book 11 with the words *Item pars secunda*.[24] The second argument is connected to the content of the two groupings. It is often agreed that books 1–10 are more intellectual and spiritual than books 11–20, which are more concerned with material reality. "The first half of the *Etymologies* focuses on the spiritual and intellectual aspects of man. […] In the second half of the *Etymologies* the general subject is man in his material dimensions, and his environment."[25]

And yet, this division into two parts does not seem obvious to me. One might ask if this was not influenced, unconsciously, by the Oxford edition of Lindsay, which breaks the work into two volumes in just this way.[26] But as its editor said explicitly, "The division of the whole work into 'pars I' (= Books 1–10) and 'pars II' (= Books 11–20) was a mere matter of convenience."[27]

22 The most common division is into two parts in this way, but it is an overstatement to declare, as does Carmen Codoñer, "De l'Antiquité au Moyen Âge: Isidore de Séville," in *L'encyclopédisme. Actes du Colloque de Caen, 12–16 janvier 1987*, ed. Annie Becq (Paris: 1991), 31, that this division is generally accepted by all.

23 This argument is proposed, notably by Carmen Codoñer, "La enciclopedia. Un género sin definición. Siglos I a. C.–VII d. C.," in *Giornate Filologiche Genovesi. L'enciclopedismo dall'Antichità al Rinascimento* (Genoa: 2012), 152–53.

24 See Codoñer, *Introducción al Libro X*, 20–25; see also her "Isidorus Hispalensis ep.," 283–84.

25 Josefa Cantó Llorca, "La distribución del material en la segunda mitad de las *Etimologías* de Isidoro de Sevilla," *Antigüedad y Cristianismo* 3 (1986), 331 and 334. I mention J. Cantó Llorca because her formulation is especially clear, but the same idea can be found in other experts on Isidore: see, e.g., Jacques Fontaine, "Isidore de Séville et la mutation de l'encyclopédisme antique," *Cahiers d'histoire mondiale* 9 (1966), 527–28; Carmen Codoñer, "Historia del texto de las *Etimologías* isidorianas," in *Actas del III Congreso Hispánico de Latín Medieval* (*León, 26–29 de septiembre de 2001*), ed. Maurilio Pérez González (León: 2002), 485 and 488.

26 Wallace M. Lindsay, *Isidori Hispalensis episcopi Etymologiarum siue Originum libri XX*, Oxford Classical Texts (Oxford: 1911).

27 Wallace M. Lindsay, "The Editing of Isidore's *Etymologiae*," *The Classical Quarterly* 5 (1911), 50.

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The whole of the work was too long to fit into a single volume, so the break between books 10 and 11 made it possible to publish two volumes of about equal size, each containing the same number of books. The same solution was applied in the bilingual edition (Latin and Spanish) published in Madrid in 1982. Significantly, the reprint of this edition in 2004 appeared as a single volume.[28]

Among the arguments in favor of dividing the work into two parts, the historical one is apparently the strongest, since it has an objective basis: it is not the interpretation of modern readers but the evidence of the oldest manuscripts, going back, perhaps, as far as Isidore himself. However, it seems to me that two different points of view are being conflated here: the diachronic point of view (the history of the composition of the *Etymologies*) and the synchronic (the analysis of the completed work). It is not necessary to conclude that because, at a given moment in the first stage of their composition, the *Etymologies* (may have) consisted only of their present first ten books, those books should be dissociated from the ten that follow (in the final version). It would be better to reverse the reasoning: if Isidore chose to add to his first version (hypothetically limited to the first ten books), it was because he considered it incomplete. It would then be paradoxical to continue to dissociate the parts that the author sought to bring together. It is probably not an accident, for example, that the second part begins with a book devoted to the parts of the human body (book 11), because this allows the creation of a link between books 9, 10, and 11, all three devoted to humans: human institutions in book 9, human properties in book 10, and human anatomy in book 11. The contrast between a first part about intellectual training of man and a second part devoted to describing material reality also should be nuanced. For example, book 9 discusses geographical questions that are quite close to those of books 13, 14, and 15.[29] In what way is it more "intellectual" or "spiritual"? It too describes the visible world. Conversely, seemingly very materialistic books like books 15 or 20 also have a theological background and theological aims.[30]

28 Reta and Casquero, *San Isidoro de Sevilla*.

29 Two good overviews of the geographical chapters of the *Etymologies* have appeared: Silke Diederich, "Oikumene im Wandel – Isidor von Sevilla," in *Vermessung der Oikumene*, eds. Klaus Geus and Michael Rathmann (Berlin: 2013), 255–86; Andrew H. Merrills, "Geography and Memory in Isidore's *Etymologies*," in *Mapping Medieval Geographies. Geographical Encounters in the Latin West and Beyond, 300–1600*, ed. Keith D. Lilley (Cambridge: 2013), 45–64.

30 Jean-Yves Guillaumin (with the collaboration of Pierre Monat), *Isidore de Séville. Étymologies. Livre XV. Les constructions et les terres* (Paris: 2016), vii-xxi; Jean-Yves Guillaumin, *Isidore de Séville. Étymologies. Livre XX. De penu et instrumentis domesticis et rusticis* (Paris: 2010), xxiv.

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More than a century ago, another bipartite structure was proposed by Ernest Brehaut.[31] According to him, the first eight books constitute an "encyclopedia of education," that is, a textbook of liberal arts and religion, inspired by Martianus Capella and Cassiodorus; books 9–20 form an "encyclopedia of all knowledge," in the tradition of Varro or Pliny the Elder. Time has not been kind to Brehaut's book which is rarely cited by Isidore experts today. Still, that his division into two big units is not absurd is suggested by the fact that it was echoed by Codoñer. According to her, the first part of the *Etymologies* is a kind of textbook of liberal arts, to which Isidore added other subjects, like medicine, law, and history, creating a "kind of textbook intended exclusively for clerics." Only after this does the "encyclopedia proper begin, the description of everything known about the material world, the visible."[32] Codoñer retains and even defends the traditional bipartite division into two parts of ten books each (1–10 and 11–20), but it seems to me that her analysis is closer to the organization proposed by E. Brehaut. The textbook of liberal arts corresponds to books 1–3, the Isidorian addition (medicine, law, and history) to books 4–5, and the "textbook intended for clerics" to books 6–8. The "encyclopedia proper," the description of the visible world, begins with book 9.

Codoñer herself also suggested another two-part model that seems to me to account for the evidence even more effectively: books 1–5 provide the "techniques" allowing knowledge to be acquired, whereas books 6–20 provide things to know.[33] In the end, it is J. Fontaine, working with this model, who offered the best interpretation of the structure of the *Etymologies.* He identified four broad sections: books 1–5 (preparation for a range of learning); 6–8 (religion); 9–14 (man, animate nature, and the universe); and 15–20 (material culture).[34] But Fontaine marks the first five books clearly as preparation for the knowledge set forth in the remaining books. Fontaine's essential contribution comes from his dynamic interpretation of books 6–20, arranged in a descending hierarchy: Isidore starts with God (books 6–8), goes on to man (books 9–11), to animals (book 12), inanimate nature (books 13–17), and finally to man-made objects (books 18–20). The order is not static, organized by the juxtaposition of distinct

31 Ernest Brehaut, *An Encyclopedist of the Dark Ages* (New York: 1912), 44 and 86–87.

32 Carmen Codoñer, review of: Fontaine, *Isidore de Séville. Genèse et originalité de la culture hispanique au temps des Wisigoths*, in *Gnomon* 76 (2004), 459.

33 Carmen Codoñer Merino, "La literatura," in *Historia de España Menéndez Pidal,* ed. José María Jover Zamora, vol. 3.2: *España visigoda. La monarquía, la cultura, las artes* (Madrid: 1991), 245.

34 Jacques Fontaine, *Isidore de Séville. Genèse et originalité de la culture hispanique au temps des Wisigoths* (Turnhout: 2000), 176–79.

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thematic blocks, but proceeds. rather according to a dynamic of the whole, where each book is connected to the others.

The art of connections can be seen especially in the care that Isidore takes with transitions, setting up connecting bridges. This is visible at the start of pivotal books, or those that can seem transitional: book 6, which presents the descendent dynamic of the *Etymologies*, and book 9, where the description of the visible world begins. Book 6 ("Books and ecclesiastical offices") is naturally connected to book 5 ("Laws and time"). From certain angles, they have the same contents, both juridical and chronological, with the distinction that book 5 is mostly profane, while book 6 focuses on conciliar canons and the liturgical year.[35] Those two books can therefore be understood as a sort of diptych describing the practical instruments required for civil and religious life.[36] As for book 9, depicting the civic dimensions of human society, it logically follows book 8, which presents human society from a Christian point of view. This is in keeping with Augustine's model where man has a place in both the city of God and the city of man.[37] Chapter titles (which may be a reflection of Isidore's *tituli*)[38] stress the continuity between the two books: the last chapter of book 8 (Chapter 11) is titled *De diis gentium* (the gods of nations), and the first chapter of book 9 is *De linguis gentium* (the tongues of nations).[39]

"The generally descending hierarchy of facts" and "overlap of the various elements in a constructed whole" in book 15 can be applied to understanding the whole of the *Etymologies*.[40] The movement of the whole and the ability to organize the various books is what, beyond the widespread use of etymologies, helps make the encyclopedia coherent.

Isidore drew inspiration from many sources, he borrowed from many kinds of works, but he was able to bring these different genres together into a relatively coherent whole. For example, the first three books are often treated as a unit, and indeed they are a textbook of liberal arts, but their organization and conception are not especially different from that of the other books of the *Etymologies*. Analysing the chapters devoted to arithmetic and geometry in book 3, Jean-Yves Guillaumin showed how Isidore gave them a distinctly personal

35 Reydellet, "La diffusion," 416. As has already been noted, in some early manuscripts, the present books 5–6 are joined as a single book.

36 Codoñer, "Isidorus Hispalensis ep.," 277.

37 Codoñer, "De l'Antiquité au Moyen Âge," 33.

38 Codoñer, *Introducción al Libro X*, 24.

39 Marc Reydellet, *Isidore de Séville. Étymologies. Livre IX. Les langues et les groupes sociaux* (Paris: 1984), 3.

40 See Guillaumin and Monat, "Introduction," *Isidore de Séville. Étymologies. Livre XV. Les constructions et les terres* (Paris: 2016), viii.

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slant.[41] For example, in the field of geometry, he omits a number of passages found in his model, Cassiodorus, replacing them with land-surveying and etymological considerations. Even when he describes the liberal arts, his final aim is practical (geometry is a means of measuring land), and his approach is above all taxonomic and etymological.

There are, of course, some passages that seem to preserve their independence, like 5.39, which belongs to a quite specific literary genre, the chronicle, or book 10, quite distinct from the other books by its alphabetical arrangement (if in fact this is attributable to Isidore himself).[42] However, even 5.39 is well integrated into book 5 and the body of the *Etymologies* as a whole.[43] Book 10 has an obvious link to the other books: the words there are almost all defined in terms of etymology, the procedure that gives the work as a whole its title. Moreover, its place, between book 9 (on human society) and book 11 (devoted to human anatomy), can be explained if we recall that it describes human qualities.

To claim that the *Etymologies* form a totally homogeneous whole would be excessive, but taken together, it presents a logical structure with a degree of coherence. Given the multiplicity of sources on which the work is based and the mass of information that the *Etymologies* contains, its coherence is one of the most notable aspects of the work.

4 Etymology

Isidore uses four grammatical categories to explain words: analogy (*analogia*), gloss (*glossa*), differentiation (*differentia*), and etymology (*etymologia*).[44] These function, to use Jacques Fontaine's words, like "categories of understanding." According to Isidore's definition, "analogy, that is, similarity" (*analogia, id est similitudo*), is the "comparison of similar things" (*similium conparatio*).[45]

41 Jean-Yves Guillaumin, "Isidore de Séville, l'arithmétique et la géométrie," in *Wisigothica. After Manuel C. Díaz y Díaz*, eds. Carmen Codoñer and Paulo Farmhouse Alberto (Florence: 2014), 91–117.

42 It is possible that the alphabetical order of book 10 of the *Etymologiae* was not Isidore's creation, Carmen Codoñer, "El libro X de las *Etymologiae*, ¿léxico o diccionario?" *Voces* 21 (2010), 50. But, as Codoñer is careful to point out, nothing can be proven, especially because all extant manuscripts transmit the book in alphabetical order.

43 Jamie Wood, *The Politics of Identity in Visigothic Spain: Religion and Power in the Histories of Isidore of Seville* (Leiden: 2012), 109–12.

44 Isidore, *Etymologiae* 1.5.4, and the important analysis by Jacques Fontaine, *Isidore de Séville et la culture classique dans l'Espagne wisigothique*, 2nd ed. (Paris: 1983), 36–48.

45 Isidore, *Etymologiae* 1.28.1–2.

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For example, "the leaves of books are so called from their likeness (*ex similitudine*) to the leaves of trees" (*Etym.* 6.14.6). Metaphorical appellations based on resemblance are sometimes included among the various categories of etymologies found in Isidore's work,[46] although the author himself does not include them in his list of the different kinds of etymology (*Etym.* 1.29.3–4). Instead, he treats *similitudo* as a form of analogy, not an etymology. From the morphological point of view, an etymological relationship almost always implies that there are two words in relation to one another, one of which is derived from the other. On the other hand, naming something metaphorically does not create a new word, but rather a pre-existing term acquires a new sense. Furthermore, the common characteristics of the two do not appear in the word itself. For example, a sheet of paper (*folia*) is like the leaf of a tree (*folium*) because both are thin, delicate; but this quality does not appear in the noun *folia*, and that is why Isidore does not consider it useful to make this relationship explicit. One is not derived from the other; they are the same word with different meanings, and therefore in such cases etymology is not involved.[47]

A gloss defines a word by means of another word.[48] As J. Fontaine remarks, in practice, a gloss is often used to provide a simple synonym to explain a Latin word that might be difficult, or a Greek word,[49] for example, "*Gnarus,* 'knowing'" (*Etym.* 10.112), or "*Katholicus*, 'universal,' a Greek term" (*Etym.* 10.153). According to Isidore, the gloss "defines the utterance in question by means of one single word" (*uno et singulari uerbo*). In reality, the term offered as a gloss is often further defined by one or several other words. For example, in the expression, *Subulcus, porcorum pastor* (*Etym.* 10.263), pastor ("herdsman") is offered as a gloss for *subulcus* ("swine-herd"), but *pastor* itself requires the addition of *porcorum* ("of pigs"); only then is the sense of *subulcus* clear. The limits of gloss can be extended to include more complex definitions, like *populus*:

> Populus est humanae multitudinis coetus iuris consensu et concordi communione sociatus

46 See Olga Spevak, "Isidore de Séville: le livre XIV des *Etymologiae* et la tradition étymologique," *Revue des Études Latines* 87 (2009), 236.

47 Actually, Isidore's distinction between *analogia*/*similitudo* and *etymologia* is not always perfectly clear. In this example, *folia* and *folium* are a little different, at least synchronically: *folia* is the plural of *folium* reinterpreted as a feminine singular. For a stricter use of *analogia*, see *Etymologiae* 12.6.4–6, where Isidore explains how some fishes were named "on a similarity (*ex similitudine*) to land animals."

48 Isidore, *Etymologiae* 1.30.1.

49 Fontaine, *Isidore de Séville et la culture classique*, 47.

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> The *populus* is an assembly of a human multitude, allied by the sharing of law and by agreement as if of one mind (*Etym.* 9.4.5).[50]

Populus is first glossed by *humanae multitudinis coetus* ("an assembly of a human multitude"), followed by the characteristics of that "assembly." Isidore adds another detail to his discussion of *populus*:

> Populus autem eo distat a plebibus quod populus uniuersi ciues sunt, connumeratis senioribus ciuitatis. Plebs autem reliquum uulgus sine senioribus ciuitatis. Populus ergo tota ciuitas est. Vulgus uero plebs est.
>
> But the *populus* differs in this respect from the plebs, because all the citizens make up the *populus*, including the higher ranks of the citizen body. But the plebs is the remaining people apart from the higher ranks of the citizen body. So the *populus* is the entire citizen body, while the plebs is the common people (*Etym.* 9.4.5–6).

This brings to bear a third "category of understanding": differentiation, which allows distinctions to be made between two words, which are close in sense or in pronunciation, and are therefore often confused.[51]

In any case, analogy, gloss, and differentiation are not used very frequently in the *Etymologies*, in which the principal category is etymology. The fact that Isidore chose to give his encyclopedia the title *Etymologies* is proof of its importance. In some editions (notably Wallace Martin Lindsay's) the work has another title: *Origines*. But *Etymologiae* is the only one attested in the manuscript tradition and in the catalogues of medieval libraries, and also the one used by Braulio in the *Renotatio*. It is true that Braulio's letter IV mentions the "books of *Origines*" (*libri … Originum*), but this is the only—very indirect—evidence for *Origines* over *Etymologiae*. Basing his remarks primarily on this passage, Fontaine conjectured that perhaps Isidore chose *Origines* as a first title before finally adopting *Etymologiae*.[52] But this hypothesis does not undermine the testimony of the entire manuscript tradition: the definitive title is *Etymologiae*.

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50 This translation uses that of Jamie Wood, "Elites and Baptism: Religious 'Strategies of Distinction' in Visigothic Spain," in *Elite and Popular Religion*, eds. Kate Cooper and Jeremy Gregory (Woodbridge: 2006), 5.

51 Isidore, *Etymologiae* 1.31.

52 Jacques Fontaine, "Cohérence et originalité de l'étymologie isidorienne," in *Homenaje a Eleuterio Elorduy, S.J.* (Bilbao: 1978), 142–44.

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The choice is significant. In dictionaries of modern languages, the *Oxford English Dictionary*, for example, etymology is treated as supplementary information, independent of the definition proper of a word. In contrast, in the *Etymologies,* not only is etymology included in the definition, but it is the very foundation of the definition. Isidore's concept of etymology has been the subject of many studies by both historians of the philosophy of language[53] and Latin philologists.[54] Attempting to understand the logic and the range of chapter 1.29, "On Etymology" (*De etymologia*), they applied themselves to distinguishing Isidore's use of *etymologia* and *origo*, and, beyond the *Etymologies*, they showed that Isidore's theory had roots in ancient grammatical thought. The quantity and quality of these studies permit me to be relatively brief here. We should recall that Isidore's own account is very succinct. The famous chapter 1.29 on etymology consists of only 225 words. This brevity is not surprising, because Latin writers did not devote many pages to etymological theory.[55] Moreover, Isidore is generally not especially expansive in explaining the theoretical assumptions that underlie his work. As we have seen, nowhere does he offer an explanation of the principles underpinning the organization of his encyclopedia. It should also be noted that although he wrote an entire work in a style dominated by synonyms, the *Synonyma*, he only devotes a paragraph to the definition of synonymy (*Etym.* 2.21.6). The very fact that he devotes a whole chapter to etymology is therefore significant. However, one cannot fail to be struck by the contrast between Isidore's short chapter and the large number of commentaries it has provoked recently.

These commentaries are probably caused by the bewilderment of modern readers when faced with Isidore's concept and widespread application of etymology, and, more generally, with the significance of this concept in ancient and medieval thought. Modern linguistics, following Ferdinand de Saussure, distinguishes the signifier of a word, that is, its form, its acoustic effect, from its

53 Mark Amsler, *Etymology and Grammatical Discourse in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages* (Amsterdam: 1989), esp. 133–72; Davide Del Bello, *Forgotten Paths. Etymology and the Allegorical Mindset* (Washington, DC: 2007), esp. 95–115.

54 The starting point is Fontaine's indispensable article, "Cohérence" (which contains references to the major earlier works, 113–14, n. 2). See also Fontaine, *Isidore de Séville. Genèse et originalité*, 288–90, which picks up and very clearly recapitulates his earlier work's major conclusions. More recently, see Codoñer, "El libro x de las *Etymologiae*," 66, n. 23, with bibliography up to 2010. To these can be added Magallón García, *La tradición gramatical*, 261–368, and Bernard Ribémont, *Les origines des encyclopédies médiévales. D'Isidore de Séville aux Carolingiens* (Paris: 2001), 13–191.

55 This point is noted by Françoise Desbordes, "La pratique étymologique des Latins et son rapport à l'histoire," in *L'étymologie de l'Antiquité à la Renaissance*, ed. Claude Buridant (Villeneuve-d'Ascq: 1998), 69.

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signified, that is, the concept to which it is tied. The connection between the signifier and the signified is arbitrary, that is, unmotivated. There is no natural relation between a word and the concept associated with it. To put it another way, the relationship between a word and the concept it designates depends entirely on a convention accepted by the speakers. Saussure nuances this principle by adding that some words can by "relatively motivated," as is the case for compound or derived words. Another major contribution of Saussurian linguistics is the distinction between diachrony and synchrony. The diachronic study of a language seeks to understand its evolution over the course of its history, while a synchronic approach focuses on a single moment in the history of that language.

In a very schematic way, which will be further examined below, Isidore's point of view is almost totally different from that of Saussure. For Isidore, there is usually a natural connection between a word and what it signifies. The word is not an arbitrary sign of the thing, but rather a reflection of its essence. Starting with the word, it is possible to drill down to its very essence. Of course, Isidore is aware that a word often has only an imperfect reflection of the thing, but this imperfect is like a hazy mirror that must be cleared up. Clarifying the mirror is all that is needed to gain access to reality,[56] and that is exactly the role of etymology.

> Etymologia est origo uocabulorum, cum uis uerbi uel nominis per interpretationem colligitur. […] Cuius cognitio saepe usum necessarium habet in interpretatione sua. Nam dum uideris unde ortum est nomen, citius uim eius intellegis. Omnis enim rei inspectio etymologia cognita planior est.[57]

> Etymology (*etymologia*) is the origin (*origo*) of words, when the force of a verb or a noun[58] is inferred through interpretation. […] The knowledge of a word's etymology often has an indispensable usefulness for interpreting the word, for when you have seen whence a word has originated, you understand its force more quickly. Indeed, one's insight into anything is clearer when its etymology is known (*Etym.* 1.29.1–2).

56 The image of the hazy mirror can be found in Ribémont, *Les origines*, 44.

57 Text from Lindsay's edition.

58 An alternate reading would be "the force of a word or name" ("uis uerbi uel nominis"): see Amsler, *Etymology*, 139–40.

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From the etymological experience of a word, its "force" can be seen, its essential meaning, leading to the connection between the word and the thing. By discovering the deep sense of a word in this way, the etymologist is not far from discovering the very essence of reality as it was conceived by God. Clearly—and this is an important detail—Isidore himself recognized that "some things received names not according to their innate qualities, but by the caprice of human will" (*Etym.* 1.29.3). This constitutes a major concession that explains why sometimes, as we have seen, recourse to a gloss, an analogy, or differentiation is required to explain certain words.

Nonetheless, this limit of etymology is almost never mentioned in the rest of the work. One of the few exceptions concerns the word *quinque* ("five"), which "did not take its name from nature, but rather from the arbitrary will" (*Etym.* 3.3.2). At the same time, it is worth noting that the source is not an undefined "arbitrary will," but rather "the arbitrary will of the one who bestowed the names." The intent of this periphrasis is not clear. It evokes the "legislator" of Plato's *Cratylus* (which Isidore may have known indirectly) or Adam at the start of Genesis (2:20), although the names given by Adam were in Hebrew,[59] or divine intervention in a more general sense.[60] In any case, what matters here is that when Isidore speaks of the arbitrary origin of certain words he does not mean, as modern linguists would, that there is an arbitrary convention among speakers of the same language; he assumes that their origin is super-human.

The notion of origin, which is at the very heart of the definition of etymology ("Etymology is the origin of words"), might give Isidore's etymologies a historic depth.[61] It is known that Isidore used the word *origo* in the title of one of his major historical works (the second version of the *History of the Goths* is titled *De origine Gothorum*, "On the Origin of the Goths"). He also used the word in the *Etymologies* (15.1.2), explicitly attaching it to a historical context: "histories" (*historiae*) bring us the "origin" (*origo*) of certain cities. Still, Isidore's etymology is not historical. It is neither diachronic nor synchronic; rather, it is achronic. It strives to present the "origin" of a word, but without giving its history. To the best of my knowledge, the definition of etymology has never been compared to another text of Isidore concerning the creation of the world (*Sententiae* 1.8.6). Yet this text is very interesting, since it shows clearly that *origo*

59 Isidore, *Etymologiae*, 12.1.2.

60 Fontaine, *Isidore de Séville et la culture classique*, 359, n. 1.

61 Fontaine, "Cohérence," 134–38; Wood, *The Politics of Identity*, 106–07. See also the chapter by Jamie Wood elsewhere in this volume.

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should not automatically be understood in a temporal sense (*origine non tempore*):

> Materies, ex qua formatus est mundus, origine non tempore res a se factas praecessit.
>
> The matter from which the world was formed preceded the things made out of it in origin, not in time.[62]

This passage from the *Sentences* draws on Augustine's *Confessions* (12.29.40),[63] but Isidore reformulates it, making it more concise and striking: *origine non tempore.* He clarifies his analysis with a comparison taken from the same passage in the *Confessions*:

> ut sonus cantum. Prior enim est sonus cantu, quia suauitas cantilenae ad sonum uocis, non sonus pertinet ad suauitatem. Ac per hoc utrumque simul sunt, sed ille ad quem pertinet cantus prior est, id est sonus.
>
> in the same sense as sound precedes the song.[64] For sound is prior to the song, because the pleasantness of the song pertains to the sound of the voice; the sound does not pertain to the pleasantness. And because of this, both exist simultaneously (*simul*), although that to which the song pertains is prior, that is, the sound.

The origin is prior in logical terms, not chronologically. In other words, a thing is not necessarily earlier in time because it is implicated in the "origin" of another thing. The same is true for etymology: it is not because a word is implicated in the "origin" of another word that it is pre-existent; the connection between a word and its "origin" is atemporal.

Such a declaration requires nuancing, to be sure. Occasionally there is the shadow of a diachronic move to be found in Isidore's work. For example, in *Etym.* 15.4.11, the entry on "basilica" includes a real history of the word:

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62 Latin text: Pierre Cazier, ed., *Isidorus Hispalensis Sententiae*, CCSL 111 (Turnhout: 1998), 21, Thomas L. Knoebel, trans., *Isidore of Seville, Sententiae* (New York: 2018), 45.

63 See Michele Pellegrino, "Le 'Confessioni' di s. Agostino nell'opera di s. Isidoro di Siviglia," in *Isidoriana. Estudios sobre San Isidoro de Sevilla en el XIV Centenario de su nacimiento*, ed. Manuel C. Díaz y Díaz (León: 1961), 236–37 and 263.

64 See also Isidore, *Etymologiae* 3.19.8 (3.20.8 in Lindsay's edition).

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> Basilicae prius uocabantur regum habitacula, unde et nomen habent; nam basileus rex et basilicae regiae habitationes. Nunc autem ideo diuina templa basilicae nominantur, quia ibi regi omnium Deo cultus et sacrificia offeruntur.
>
> The dwellings of kings were called "basilicas" at first, whence they take their name, for the term *basileus* means "king," and basilicas, "royal habitations." But now "basilica" is the name for divine temples because there worship and sacrifices are offered to God, the king of all.

There is a clear opposition between "at first" (*prius*) and "now" (*nunc*), as well as between the imperfect tense used in the first sentence and the present tense in the second. But passages like this are rare. The near total absence of diachronic consideration is striking in the *Etymologies*, even in passages which might have—which by modern standards should have—led to such considerations. In *Etym.* 5.30.15, for example, the etymology of *meridies* ("noon") is in keeping with what is accepted today:[65]

> Meridies dicta quasi medidies, hoc est medius dies.
>
> Midday (*meridies*) is so called as if the word were *medidies*, that is, the "middle of the day" (*medius dies*).

However, the sentence is in the present tense, and *quasi* introduces the etymon "medidies" without in any way situating it in the past. In this case, etymology has no historical dimension. Another passage is even more significant, as it allows us to compare Isidore's practice to that of another ancient scholar. At issue is the definition of the word *abstemius* (*Etym.* 10.11):

> Abstemius, a temeto, id est uino, quasi abstinens a uino.
>
> Abstemious (*abstemius*), from *temetum*, that is, "wine," as if abstaining from wine.

Aulus Gellius (10.23.1) provides the same connection between *abstemius* and *temetum*:

65 See Alfred Ernout and Antoine Meillet, *Dictionnaire étymologique de la langue latine. Histoire des mots*, 4th ed. (Paris: 1959), 399–400; Michiel De Vaan, *Etymological Dictionary of Latin and the Other Italic Languages* (Leiden: 2008), 369.

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> Mulieres Romae atque in Latio aetatem abstemias egisse, hoc est uino semper, quod 'temetum' prisca lingua appellabatur, abstinuisse.
>
> The women of Rome and Latium were lifelong *abstemiae*, that is abstainers from the use of wine, called *temetum* in the old language.

Here, Aulus Gellius furnishes a temporal specificity where Isidore does not.[66]

The passages cited above have illustrated the impossibility of separating etymological theory from its practice. In the case of *meridies*, for example, the etymon is introduced by *quasi*. Such a metalinguistic tool is significant, since *quasi* neutralizes the distinction between the cause and the origin of the word. It permits the etymon of a word to be presented from the point of view of its form at the same time that it explains its meaning.[67] *Meridies dicta quasi medidies* means both that "*meridies* is derived from *medidies*" and "*meridies* is so called because the word means the 'middle of the day.'"

However, philologists have only recently begun to focus on the formal procedures Isidore used in the *Etymologies*. Carmen Codoñer was the pioneer in this area, distinguishing four "basic formulas":[68] equivalence, indicated directly by means of one or several synonyms, a present participle, or a relative pronoun; the phrase *ab* + ablative; *quasi*, addressed above; and a causal subordinate clause starting with *quod* or *quia*. This typology was noted by other philologists who added other prepositions like *ex*, *ob*, *pro* or *propter*, or adverbs like *inde* and *unde*.[69] However, as Codoñer pointed out, these different types are often combined. They are discriminated here in the interests of clarity, but they engage the same conception of etymology—and the desire for variation should be kept in mind. Etymology is not represented by any particular

66 It does not seem that Isidore knew Aulus Gellius directly. Despite the proximity of the two authors, in this case it is plausible that they are using a common source independently. See other parallels in Robert Maltby, *A Lexicon of Ancient Latin Etymologies* (Leeds.: 1991), 2 (*s.v.* "abstemius"). Modern linguistics affirms the link between *temetum* and *abstemius*: Ernout and Meillet, *Dictionnaire étymologique*, 679–80; De Vaan, *Etymological Dictionary*, 609.

67 On Isidore's frequent blending of etymology-as-origin and etymology-as-cause see Aude Morel-Alizon, "L'expression de la cause et de l'origine dans les énoncés étymologiques latins (Varr. *Ling.* V et VI; Isid. *Etym.* X)," in *La causalité en latin*, eds. Aude Morel-Alizon and Jean-François Thomas (Paris: 2014), 157–61.

68 Codoñer, *Introducción al Libro X*, 83–85.

69 Isabel Velázquez, *Latine dicitur, uulgo uocant. Aspectos de la lengua escrita y hablada en las obras gramaticales de Isidoro de Sevilla* (Logroño: 2003), 187–96; Rosa María Herrera García, "El uso de las estructuras sintácticas que introducen la expresión del origen y la causa, en las *Etimologías* de san Isidoro de Sevilla," *Helmantica* 56 (2005), 202–08.

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syntactic structure. It requires only the presence of the origin which connects a word and its etymon phonologically, and the possibility of explaining that origin semantically.[70]

Isidore frequently superimposes morphological and semantic layers, as we saw in the case of *meridies* above, since for him etymology is at once a matter of form and meaning. But for a contemporary reader, mixing these two levels is disturbing, and sometimes even results in what seems like nonsense to us. For example, in a sentence like *Proci … a procando et petendo dicti* (*Etym.* 9.7.7), *procando* is the etymological explanation of *proci*, but not *petendo*, which is a synonym of *procando*. Isidore means at once that "*procus* comes from *procare*" (*proci … a procando*) and that "suitors are so called because they seek and claim" (*proci … a procando et petendo*). But for a modern reader, *procando* and *petendo* are not related, and bringing them together seems an aberration.[71]

That sentence is a particularly striking illustration of one of the major difficulties of ancient etymology, especially as deployed by Isidore. In contemporary usage, the autonym (that is, the word focused on, which is the sign of itself) is typographically marked by quotation marks or italics, neither of which exists in Latin. The major problem is syntax: modern languages can mark the specificity of the autonym, separating it from normal rules of agreement. Isidore is aware of this possibility. For example, in the case of *Nemo ab homine tractum*, "Nobody (*nemo*), derived from 'human being' (*homo*)" (*Etym.* 10.184), *tractum* is neuter, that is, it does not agree with the subject, *nemo*, which is masculine. In the same way, in the case of *Non … dicimus beneuolus*, "We do not say *beneuolus*" (*Etym.* 10.26), *beneuolus* is nominative even though after *dicere* an accusative would be expected. But these examples are in fact exceptions; most of the time, Isidore does present the autonym in the expected case, gender, and number. For example, in the sentence cited above, *Proci … a procando … dicti*, *petendo* is in the ablative because the preposition *a* is followed by that case, and *dicti* is masculine plural, agreeing with the subject, *proci*. It would be interesting to follow Isidore's metalinguistic choices more closely, comparing them to other Latin etymologists. Isidore's etymological theory has thus been the object of considerable study, while its practical applications have so far been little examined.[72]

70 Codoñer, *Introducción al Libro X*, 91.

71 See Christian Nicolas, "Les contours linguistiques flous de la mention," in *Hôs ephat', dixerit quispiam, comme disait l'autre… Mécanismes de la citation et de la mention dans les langues de l'Antiquité*, ed. Christian Nicolas (Grenoble: 2006), 141–42.

72 To date, this field of study has been touched only by Nicolas, "Les contours linguistiques," where the author also mentions several of his earlier works.

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5 Sources

To compose his encyclopedia, Isidore took almost all his material from earlier sources, long earning him the unflattering reputation of being a compiler lacking originality. In 1959, Jacques Fontaine revolutionized Isidorian studies by showing, on the contrary, that Isidore's originality consisted precisely in his way of choosing and treating his sources.[73] Not only did Isidore adapt his sources in very diverse ways, ranging from directly copying a long passage to free adaptations, but he also mixed and intertwined them. Rather than try to make a list of all the methods used by Isidore, I would like to focus on three practices that he used in rewriting his sources and that are likely to strike the modern reader as particularly disconcerting: "auto-combination"; citations taken out of their frame of reference; and the use of synonyms.

The word "auto-combination" was invented by Manuel Cecilio Díaz y Díaz to describe the process of contaminating a text with another that is the source of the former.[74] So, chapter 7.6 of the *Etymologies* at once borrows from the *Liber interpretationis hebraicorum nominum* of Jerome and from the *Instructiones* of Eucherius of Lyon, who himself drew his information from Jerome. It is therefore not enough to settle on the most obvious source (Jerome) without considering the intermediate source (Eucherius) as well.[75]

Isidore has another surprising habit, that of taking a sentence from a work that is about something completely different. For example, the definition of the military formation called a *cuneus* is taken from Augustine's *De ordine* and about the *Vascones* from Jerome's *Contra Vigilantium*.[76] Sometimes, the sentence has no connection at all with its original context. To use Fontaine's expression, it may be totally removed from its original frame of reference ("décadrée").[77] For example, the definition of etymology in *Etym.* 1.29.2 uses a formulation found in Tertullian where it refers to something entirely different (the origin of persecution). Likewise, the definition of a hearth in *Etym.* 20.9.1[78] is taken directly from Servius, *Aen.* 6.265, where he explains Virgil's reference to the river Phlegethon.[79]

73 Fontaine, *Isidore de Séville et la culture classique*; see also his "Problèmes de méthode dans l'étude des sources isidoriennes," in Díaz y Díaz, *Isidoriana*, 115–31.

74 See Díaz y Díaz, "Introducción," 183.

75 Jacques Elfassi, review of: Guillaumin and Monat, *Isidore de Séville. Étymologies. Livre VII*, in *Archivum Latinitatis Medii Aevi* 72 (2014), 412–13.

76 See Reydellet, *Isidore de Séville. Étymologies. Livre IX*, 20.

77 Fontaine, "Cohérence," 122, n. 26.

78 Isidore, *Etymologiae* 20.10.1 following Lindsay's numbering.

79 I believe I am the first to note this source.

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I would also like to consider another kind of rewriting that, to the best of my knowledge, has not yet been studied in the *Etymologies*: synonymous rewriting. For example, the portrait of Jerome in *Etym.* 7.1.1 is taken from Augustine (*Ciu. Dei* 18.43):[80]

> Presbyter Hieronymus, homo doctissimus et omnium trium linguarum peritus, qui… ex Hebraeo in Latinum eloquium easdem Scripturas conuerterit > Beatissimus Hieronymus, uir eruditissimus et multarum linguarum peritus, Hebraeorum nominum interpretationem primus in Latinam linguam conuertit.
>
> The most blessed Jerome, a most erudite man and skilled in many languages, first rendered the meaning of Hebrew names in the Latin language.

The synonymous rewriting can be observed for each group of words:

> – presbyter Hieronymus > beatissimus Hieronymus
> – homo doctissimus > uir eruditissimus
> – et omnium trium linguarum peritus > et multarum linguarum peritus
> – ex Hebraeo in Latinum eloquium easdem Scripturas conuerterit > Hebraeorum nominum interpretationem primus in Latinam linguam conuertit.

It is true that Isidore is referring here to Jerome's *Liber interpretationis*, while Augustine's subject was the Bible, but Isidore was under no obligation to change, for example, *homo doctissimus* into *uir eruditissimus* and *in Latinum eloquium* to *in Latinam linguam*. Isidore is much more faithful to the same passage in Augustine in *Etym.* 6.4.5.[81] Here, he rewrote almost the entirety of Augustine's text using a stylistic mode he was particularly fond of, the synonymous style that he used in his *Synonyma*. Another even more striking example concerns the invention of pottery in Samos. Pliny the Elder's *Natural History* (35.152) is rewritten:

> *In Samo primos omnium plasticen inuenisse … tradant* is totally rewritten as

80 Elfassi, review of: Guillaumin and Monat, *Isidore de Séville. Étymologies. Livre VII*, 411.

81 César Chaparro Gómez, ed., *Isidoro de Sevilla. Etimologías. Libro VI. De las Sagradas Escrituras* (Paris: 2012), 179 [= p. 46, n. 4].

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In hac insula reperta prius fictilia uasa traduntur,
Tradition has it that clay vases were first invented on this island (*Etym.* 14.6.31).[82]
– *in Samo* > *in hac insula*
– *inuenisse* > *reperta*
– *primos* > *prius*
– *plasticen* > *fictilia uasa*
– *tradant* > *traduntur*

In this case, the borrowing from Pliny is probable, as Isidore uses the same section of Pliny, more literally, in *Etym.* 20.3.3[83] (it is also possible that in *Etym.* 14 Isidore did no more than rewrite his own text from *Etym*. 20). In any case, Pliny seems to be the only writer likely to be known by Isidore to mention the invention of pottery at Samos. But clearly, without the parallel of *Etym.* 20.3.3 and without any knowledge of the antique traditions about the invention of pottery, the identification of the source would have been very difficult.

Isidore does not usually cite his sources. He incorporates extracts into his text proper without any indication of their origin. When he does introduce them by stating the name of the author explicitly, or even the title of the work he is excerpting, that generally indicates that he is citing them from an intermediate source.[84] This usage, which seems paradoxical to moderns, does have a few exceptions. For example, the fact that Isidore includes Ambrose's name when he cites *De fide* in *Etym.* 11.3.35 does not mean that he was not acquainted with this text. In *Etym.* 7.1.14 and *Etym.* 8.5.70, he uses it without mentioning Ambrose; it is not possible to draw any conclusion whatsoever from the difference between the two practices.[85]

This illustrates the difficulty of distinguishing primary and secondary sources. For example, there is near unanimity that Isidore did not know Terence, Horace, or Juvenal except by means of excerpts in grammatical works or in commentaries. On the other hand, his direct acquaintance with Virgil, Quintilian, and Martial is, if not certain, at least probable.[86] Among profane authors,

82 See Jacques Elfassi, review of: Spevak, *Isidore de Séville. Étymologies. Livre XIV*, in *Archivum Latinitatis Medii Aevi* 70 (2012), 386.

83 Isidore, *Etymologiae* 20.4.3, following Lindsay's numbering. See Guillaumin, *Isidore de Séville. Étymologies. Livre XX*, 52, n. 211.

84 See Fontaine, *Isidore de Séville et la culture classique*, 745.

85 See Jacques Elfassi, "Connaître la bibliothèque pour connaître les sources: Isidore de Séville," *Antiquité Tardive* 23 (2015), 62.

86 It is impossible in such a study to examine each case in detail. See an initial approach (with a bibliography of earlier works) in Elfassi, "Connaître la bibliothèque," 63–64.

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those most used by Isidore are "technical" authors: grammarians, like Diomedes, Pompeius, or Sergius; historians, like Eutropius, Florus, Justin, or Rufius Festus; doctors, like Caelius Aurelianus, Dioscorides (known in two separate Latin translations), Gargilius Martialis, or Vindicianus;[87] agronomists, like Columella and Palladius; or experts on architecture, like Faventinus. The five profane authors he uses most often are, in order of increasing use: Placidus; Festus; Pliny the Elder; Solinus; and Servius.[88] But Isidore makes much more use of Christian authors, especially Ambrose, Jerome, Gregory the Great, and Augustine (again listed in order of increasing use). José Carlos Martín has published a very useful list of the Patristic works that Isidore knew,[89] yet much detailed analysis remains to be done.[90]

Many other sources of the *Etymologies* are still to be discovered. The edition of the *Etymologies* presently being prepared in Paris in the collection "Auteurs Latins du Moyen Âge" has profited from electronic data banks, which since the 1990s have greatly facilitated the search for sources.[91] However, it should not be forgotten that this undertaking is still incomplete (books 1, 4, 8, and 10 have not yet appeared[92]). Even these recent editions are sometimes imperfect.[93] Moreover, the search for sources is unending. In a review of the edition of book 14, I was able to add thirty-seven sources the editor had missed.[94] Later I found a

87 On Isidore's medical sources, see Arsenio Ferraces Rodríguez, ed., *Isidorus medicus. Isidoro de Sevilla y los textos de medicina* (A Coruña: 2005).

88 On Festus, see Jacques Elfassi, "Festus chez Isidore de Séville," *Eruditio Antiqua* 6 (2014), 153–214.

89 José Carlos Martín-Iglesias, "La biblioteca cristiana de los Padres hispanovisigodos (siglos VI–VII)," *Veleia* 30 (2013), 259–88.

90 As, for example, in the article by Alessandro Capone, "Tertulliano e Isidoro di Siviglia," in *Auctor et Auctoritas in Latinis Medii Aevi Litteris. Proceedings of the VIth Congress of the International Medieval Latin Committee* (*Benevento-Naples, November 9–13, 2010*), eds. Edoardo D'Angelo and Jan Ziolkowski (Florence: 2014), 157–98. See also my detailed review of Capone's article ("Tertulliano e Isidoro di Siviglia") in *Chronica Tertullianea et Cyprianea 2014*, nº 57, in *Revue d'études augustiniennes et patristiques* 61 (2015), 357–60.

91 The first of Isidore's editors to have made use of computerized data banks was Miguel Rodríguez-Pantoja, *Isidoro de Sevilla. Etimologías. Libro XIX. De naves, edificios y vestidos* (Paris: 1995).

92 However, the sources of book 8 were studied by Angelo Valastro Canale, *Herejías y sectas en la Iglesia Antigua. El octavo libro de las* Etimologías *de Isidoro de Sevilla y sus fuentes* (Madrid: 2000).

93 This is especially the case in book 13: Giovanni Gasparotto, *Isidoro di Siviglia. Etimologie. Libro XIII. De mundo et partibus* (Paris: 2004). See the review (harsh, but unfortunately accurate) by Patrick Gautier Dalché, in *Archivum Latinitatis Medii Aevi* 62 (2004), 305–11.

94 Elfassi, review of: Spevak, *Isidore de Séville. Étymologies. Livre XIV*, in *Archivum Latinitatis Medii Aevi* 70 (2012), 385–87.

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thirty-eighth, indicated in a second review.[95] I thought that I covered them all, but since then I have found five or perhaps six others:

– *Etym.* 14.3.13 < Pliny the Elder, *Nat. hist.* 6.137 (ed. Mayhoff, p. 487 l. 9)
– *Etym.* 14.3.40 < Eucherius, *Instr.* 2.4 (ed. Mandolfo, l. 218–21)[96]
– *Etym.* 14.4.1 (first sentence) < perhaps Solinus 3.1 (ed. Mommsen, p. 44 l. 13)
– *Etym.* 14.4.1 (second sentence) < Hyginus, *Astr.* 2.21.1 (ed. Viré, l. 875–78)[97]
– *Etym.* 14.5.20 < Latin commentary on the *Aphorisms of* Hippocrates Lat A 2.46[98]
– *Etym.* 14.6.14 < Rufius Festus 13.1 (ed. Arnaud-Lindet, p. 19 l. 12)

It is not implausible that others remain to be discovered.

Recent work has identified not only a large number of sources but also texts that previously scholars had no idea that Isidore might have known, like Augustine's *Contra Secundinum* and his Sermon 4, sources for books 5 and 7 of the *Etymologies*.[99] I have also just discovered that *Etym.* 10.240 borrows from Basil's *Rule*, as translated by Rufinus (cap. 110, resp. 1–3, CSEL 86, p. 137 l. 3–9)—the first known sign of this text in Visigothic Spain.[100] It is worth repeating: there are still many sources to be found.

6 Medieval Reception

This will be a short section, for three reasons. The first is that this *Companion* already has several chapters concerning Isidore's medieval reception, including that of the *Etymologies*.[101] Moreover, Carmen Cardelle de Hartmann has

95 Elfassi, review of: Spevak, *Isidore de Séville. Étymologies. Livre XIV*, in *Revue des Études Latines* 90 (2012), 355–56.

96 See Patrick Gautier Dalché, "Isidorus Hispalensis, *De gentium uocabulis* (*Etym.* IX, 2): quelques sources non repérées," *Revue des Études Augustiniennes* 31 (1985), 281, n. 8.

97 See Jacques Elfassi, "Isidore de Séville connaissait-il les *Fables* d'Hygin?" *Eruditio Antiqua* 10 (2018), 84.

98 See Manuel Enrique Vázquez Buján, "Isidoro de Sevilla y el antiguo comentario latino a los *Aforismos* hipocráticos: una revisión," in Codoñer and Farmhouse Alberto, *Wisigothica*, 234.

99 There is a list of these recent discoveries (not limited to the *Etymologies*) in Elfassi, "Connaître la bibliothèque," 60.

100 See Jacques Elfassi, "La découverte de nouvelles sources d'Isidore de Séville," *Connaissance des Pères de l'Église* 145 (2017), 50.

101 See the chapters in Part 3 of this volume.

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published an article on this subject which provides an *état présent* of knowledge about this question and outlines a few original approaches. There is no point in repeating what she has already written.[102] In the end, the study of the *Etymologies*' medieval reception is a vast field, of which so much work remains to be done. It is more appropriate to discuss what is not known than to claim to offer even a provisional synthesis.

Still, it is worth recalling that the foundation of any study of the transmission of the *Etymologies* in the Middle Ages is the list of manuscripts published by August Eduard Anspach.[103] That list includes 1080 entries, but Baudoin Van de Abeele has established that only 455 manuscripts include either a complete text or a substantial portion of the *Etymologies* (at least two books).[104] If this seems to reduce the corpus, we should at the same time recall that at the time when Anspach wrote his list, many collections were only partially catalogued. So, there are probably more than 500 extant manuscripts of the *Etymologies*.[105]

So many manuscripts make a global study of the manuscript tradition impossible. Until now, work in this field concentrated on the oldest manuscripts.[106] Carmen Codoñer, who at present is probably the person who has examined the greatest number of manuscripts of the *Etymologies*, also drew attention to the many kinds of transformations this text underwent in the Middle Ages: selections of extracts, additions, or displacement of certain passages.[107] This is very interesting work, but it brings with it the possibility of creating a false notion of the medieval reception of the *Etymologies.* Although I am not able to back this affirmation with precise numbers, it seems to me that most medieval manuscripts contain the "canonical" text, close to the text as we read it today.

In 2014, I had the opportunity to study a manuscript that the private owner wished to have appraised, supported by an agreement with the Institut de Recherche et d'Histoire des Textes in Paris.[108] This 10th-century copy, which

102 Carmen Cardelle de Hartmann, "Uso y recepción de las *Etymologiae* de Isidoro," in Codoñer and Farmhouse Alberto, *Wisigothica*, 477–501.

103 A list published posthumously by José María Fernández Catón, "Las *Etimologías* en la tradición manuscrita medieval estudiada por el Prof. Dr. Anspach," *Archivos leoneses* 19 (1965), 121–384.

104 Baudoin Van den Abeele, "La tradition manuscrite des *Étymologies* d'Isidore de Séville: pour une reprise en main du dossier," *Cahiers de Recherches Médiévales* 16 (2008), 198.

105 See the chapters in Part 3 of this volume.

106 See especially the summary by Díaz y Díaz, "Introducción," 200–12.

107 See Carmen Codoñer, "Transmisión y recepción de las *Etimologías*," in *Estudios de latín medieval hispánico. Actas del V Congreso internacional de latín medieval hispánico. Barcelona, 7–10 de septiembre de 2009*, eds. José Martínez Gázquez, Óscar de la Cruz Palma and Candida Ferrero Hernández (Florence: 2011), 5–26.

108 I have presented the main conclusions of this study in the 48th Congress of the APLAES (Association des Professeurs de Langues Anciennes de l'Enseignement Supérieur), held in Besançon on 29–31 May 2015. I hope the acts will be published.

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once belonged to Sir Thomas Phillipps (described in his catalogue as number 2129), was sold at Christie's in London on 23 November 2010 (sale 7882, lot 9). It contains a text broken off by lost quires at *Etym.* 11.1.137. Otherwise it is in keeping with the "canonical" version of the *Etymologies.* However, this manuscript is not without interest because it has many signs of having been handled. In particular, there is evidence of two occasions when the text was subject to systematic rereading and appropriation: one in the 12th century, resulting in the addition of many corrections all the way through; and another in the 13th century, with the addition of several entries in the margin to facilitate reading. This example proves that even "normal" manuscripts reveal interesting details of how the *Etymologies* was engaged with in late centuries. At the same time, it should be noted that a systematic study of the 500 or so extant manuscripts (not counting those which contain only excerpts) would easily become overwhelming.

The task is even vaster when the aim is to study the literary reception of the *Etymologies*, given how frequently the work was cited in the Middle Ages. Certainly, more and more is known about the way it was used in medieval encyclopedias.[109] But its influence goes well beyond encyclopedias.[110] Signs of it are found in medieval texts of many literary genres. Consulting any recent critical edition of a medieval Latin text will likely turn up a borrowing from the *Etymologies*, which need not, of course, have been the direct source. For example, of the indices of sources in the six volumes of the *Corpus Christianorum, Continuatio Mediaeualis* that appeared in 2014,[111] four contain extracts from the *Etymologies*. It can be found in the acts of a synod,[112] as well as in biblical commentaries.[113]

Such a state of affairs may seem discouraging. Studying the medieval reception of the *Etymologies* is like plunging into a boundless ocean. But it is also possible to see it as a fascinating entryway to medieval literature. To offer only a single example, Ernst Robert Curtius wished for a history of the literary genre of lists of the names of Christ until the time of Luis de León (1527–91)—and one of the major texts of that literary tradition is chapter 7.2 of the *Etymologies.*[114]

109 See Ribémont, *Les origines*, 259–71 and 289–319; and Isabelle Draelants, "Encyclopédies et lapidaires médiévaux: la durable autorité d'Isidore de Séville et de ses *Étymologies*," *Cahiers de Recherches Médiévales* 16 (2008), 39–91.

110 See the chapter by Winston Black in this volume.

111 Found in vols 135C, 195 suppl., 260, 263, 267, and 270.

112 Gerard of Cambrai, *Acta Synodi Atrebatensis* (t. 270).

113 Haimo of Auxerre, *Annotatio libri Isaiae Prophetae* (t. 135C); Claudius de Turin, *Tractatus in epistolas Pauli* (t. 263); Anselm of Laon, *Glosae super Iohannem* (t. 267).

114 See Jacques Elfassi, "Les noms du Christ chez Isidore de Séville (*Etym.* VII, 2)," in *La christologie et la Trinité chez les Pères*, ed. Marie-Anne Vannier (Paris: 2013), 241–72, esp. 253.

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7 Conclusion

My conclusion is therefore deliberately very open-ended. In the first part of this chapter, we have seen that the composition of the *Etymologies* took place over a long period of time, from a first version that was probably dedicated to King Sisebut (before 621) until an unfinished version was sent to Braulio of Zaragoza around 633; but the history of the genesis of the work still has many obscurities. Then, in the second part, I have shown how the structure of the encyclopedia has been much discussed among scholars, even if, in my opinion, the interpretation proposed by Jacques Fontaine is the best one (books 1–5 functioning as a foundation for various fields of knowledge, and books 6–20 ordered according to a descending hierarchy, from God to the material world). In the third part, I have studied the concept of etymology, again underlining the research that remains to be done: Isidore's etymological theory has been well studied, but not so its concrete application in terms of the metalinguistic methods he used to formulate etymologies. In the fourth section, devoted to the sources of the encyclopedia, I have recalled that, despite recent progress, due to the impulse given by J. Fontaine after 1959 and the development of electronic databases in the 1990s, there are still many sources to discover. Finally, the fifth part examined the medieval reception of the *Etymologies*, an immense field of investigation, which received minimal attention. I shall repeat it: there is much research still to be done on the *Etymologies*. I would be happy if this essay could encourage others to engage in the exploration of this immense and still little-known work.

Translated by Marian Rothstein

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CHAPTER 10

Isidore of Seville's Theories and Practices of Pastoral Care and Church Organization

Céline Martin

1 Introduction[1]

Pastoral functions inform all of Isidore of Seville's work and life. Having lost his parents as a child, he was raised by his older brother, Leander, bishop of Seville and friend of Gregory the Great.[2] The nature of his education (although we do not know its exact setting), as much as the influence of the author of the *Pastoral Rule*, predisposed Isidore not only to take on the responsibilities of pastor, as he did when he succeeded his brother around 602, but also to devote his life and writings to consolidating and improving the way the Church of his day guided the faithful to salvation. It might even be maintained that his political thought, equally under the influence of Gregory the Great, was shaped by the notion of pastoralism.[3] This chapter, however, will be limited to exploring the ecclesiastical side of Isidore's thought. This is expressed in many of his treatises, above all in his *De Ecclesiasticis Officiis*, devoted to the origins of liturgical rites and the diverse functions of the clergy, and in his correspondence. It appears as well in the decisions of the various councils in which he participated, where his influence was no doubt deeply felt: the Second Council of Seville, held in 619; the Third Council of Seville at an unknown date (probably in

1 The following councils, with dates (where known), abbreviations used in the text, and editions are cited in the chapter: Second Council of Seville (619; II Seville): José Vives, ed., *Concilios visigóticos e hispano-romanos* (Barcelona: 1963), 163–85; Third Council of Seville (III Seville): Gonzalo Martínez Díez and Félix Rodríguez, eds., *La colección canónica hispana* (Madrid: 1992), 5:482–85; Third Council of Toledo (589; III Toledo): Martínez Díez and Rodríguez, *La colección*, 5:49 ff; Fourth Council of Toledo (633; IV Toledo): Martínez Díez and Rodríguez, *La colección*, 5:161 ff.

2 Jacques Fontaine, "Fins et moyens de l'enseignement ecclésiastique dans l'Espagne wisigothique," *Settimane di Studio* 19 (1972), 173.

3 On the connection between the king and the bishop, each understood as pastors: Céline Martin, *La géographie du pouvoir dans l'Espagne visigothique* (Lille: 2003), 192 and 347–53; Jamie Wood, *The Politics of Identity in Visigothic Spain. Religion and Power in the Histories of Isidore of Seville* (Leiden: 2012), 146.

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622/624); and the Fourth Council of Toledo in 633, three years before his death. The corpus of Visigothic sources tends to be very theoretical, hardly a helpful guide to the study of practical actions. Council records provide the evidence that, although primarily normative (primarily but not totally, since they include sentences pronounced by the bishops functioning as a tribunal), best allows us to come close not only to Isidore's thought but also to his actions in relation to Church government. In this chapter, we will undertake a cautious attempt to evaluate Isidore of Seville's achievements, in particular within the Church.

2 Strengthening the Structure of the Church

Around the year 600, the Church, understood as a complex organization of religious experts devoted to God, was already well structured enough to be able to claim to direct the *Ecclesia*, the whole of Christianity.[4] Yet this structure was incomplete, and Isidore worked to improve it, not only by means of his written works but also by his actions as titular bishop of one of the most prestigious sees of Hispania. His efforts were aimed at enhancing the internal hierarchy of the Church and unifying it at a hitherto unprecedented level, that of the Gothic kingdom.

2.1 Structuring the *Ecclesia* Vertically

The most basic dimension of the vertical structuring of the Church involves first of all distinguishing the flock from the shepherds, that is, defending and justifying the dominant position of the clergy over laypeople. Isidore was profoundly convinced of the superiority and the responsibility of the former over the latter. This is why some of his major works—like the *Differences*, the *Synonyms*, the *Etymologies*—put grammar in the service of pastoral duties and make it an indispensable instrument for pastors. According to this vision, only those in clerical orders, who were supposed to be better educated than the rest of the population, were capable of comprehending Scripture and Creation, and as a consequence, of acting as mediators between God and his people. Despite his admiration for Augustine, Isidore is much more elitist than the

4 *Histoire du christianisme des origines à nos jours*, eds. J.-M. Mayeur, C. and L. Piétri, A. Vauchez, and M. Venard, vol. 3: *Les Églises d'Orient et d'Occident* (*432–610*), ed. L. Piétri (Paris: 1998).

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bishop of Hippo, and his views on knowledge stand far from the asceticism of Jerome or Gregory the Great, who denied the necessity of grammar in pastoral duties.[5]

So that this distinction might enter people's thinking, making the authority of the clergy over the laity acceptable, it had to be made visible, affecting physical appearance as well as behavior. From the spatial point of view, the place of each person in the church-as-edifice reflects that person's position within the *Ecclesia*. Although Isidore did not invent such a layout, he justifies it when he explains the origin of the choir, a restricted space reserved for clerics before the altar, forming a crown facing the lay worshipers separated by sex, modeled on how Moses had arranged the Hebrews to praise the Lord after their crossing of the Red Sea.[6] In terms of appearances, the tonsure was the major visible distinction between the clergy and the laity. But in the 6th century, its application varied from place to place. That is why the Fourth Council of Toledo, presided over by Isidore in 633, was concerned with unifying the tonsure throughout Hispania.[7] Henceforth, tonsure would consist of shaving the entire head except for a crown of hair—a crown appropriate to clerics with its echo of the crown of the choir—and the Gallic practice of allowing those tonsured grow their hair long was banned as peculiar to laymen. Finally, the ban on bishops employing a secular treasurer introduced by the Second Council of Seville in 619 and repeated at the Fourth Council of Toledo in 633 theorizes the necessity for this separation:

> It is not fitting that a lay person should act in the name of the bishop and that lay people should have jurisdiction in the Church. For a given office, there should not be two professions. It is also forbidden by divine Law, as Moses says: "You shall not plow with an ox and an ass at the same time," which means "You shall not associate in a single office men of differing professions."[8]

5 Eleonora Dell'Elicine, *En el principio fue el Verbo. Políticas del signo y estrategias del poder eclesiástico en el reino visigodo de Toledo (589–711)* (Cadiz: 2013), 48–59.

6 Isidore, *De ecclesiasticis officiis* 1.3: "Choros idem Moyses post transitum rubri maris primus instituit, utrorumque sexuum distinctis classibus se ac sorore praeeunte canere Deo in choris carmen triumphale perdocuit. Chorum autem ab imagine factum coronae et ex eo ita uocatum," cited by Dell'Elicine, *En el principio fue el Verbo*, 79.

7 IV Toledo, 41.

8 II Seville, 9: "Indecorum est enim laicum uicarium esse episcopi et seculares in ecclesia iudicare: in uno enim eodemque officio non decet dispar professio. Quod etiam in lege diuina prohibetur dicente Moyse: Non arabis in boue simul et asino; id est homines diuersae professionis in officio uno non sociabis." This idea is repeated in IV Toledo, 48.

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Beyond separating clergy and laity, Isidore also sought to more strictly define the hierarchy within the clergy. The ecclesiastical hierarchy was already well articulated in the 6th century. The bishops (some of whom, metropolitans, had jurisdiction over their suffragans) shared the sacerdocy with priests (so that the word *sacerdos* means both, without distinction). Beneath the bishops were deacons and clerics (*clerici*), that is, minor clergy. One of the canons of the Fourth Council of Toledo[9] concretizes this hierarchy by enumerating the attributes that should be restituted to unfairly deposed ecclesiastics: the stole, the ring, and the crosier for a bishop; the chasuble for a priest, the alb for a deacon; and for a sub-deacon and plain clerics, only such objects as they received at the time that they entered their order. Isidore insists that this inequality of rank obliged clerics to show respect and obedience to their superiors, the *seniores*.[10] This inequality also entails particular positions in the church: canon 39 of the Fourth Council of Toledo reproaches some deacons for impudently taking a place in the first choir, while priests were relegated to the second; it orders both to occupy both sections of the choir without regard to rank, so that there be no doubt that priests are superior (*sublimiores*) to deacons. The canon's suggestion that there were two distinct choirs in churches is difficult to interpret[11] and has to be related to another canon of the same council that established order of communion and the respective positions of the priest and the deacon (in front of the altar), the *clerici* (in the choir, now seen as a single area), and the *populus* (in the nave).[12] Whatever the details, the bishops at the Fourth Council of Toledo, led by Isidore of Seville, were clearly concerned with giving each person his place in the liturgical order, as much as in Christian society.[13] As early as the Second Council of Seville, Isidore also dealt with the distribution of prerogatives among the members of the hierarchically organized clergy. Implementing his metropolitan power, he settled conflicts among his suffragans (canons one and two); he enumerated the episcopal functions from which priests were excluded (canon seven), of which some

9 IV Toledo, 28.

10 Isidore, *De ecclesiasticis officiis* 2.2: "[Clerici] senioribus quoque debitam praebeant oboedientiam, neque ullo iactantiae studio semetipsos adtollant."

11 See Paul Séjourné, *Le dernier père de l'Église: Saint Isidore de Séville. Son rôle dans l'histoire du droit canonique* (Paris: 1929), 189–90. Séjourné attempts to explain this division from an architectural point of view.

12 IV Toledo, 18: "eo uidelicet ordine, ut sacerdos et Leuita ante altare communicent, in choro clerus, extra chorum populus." See Jacques Fontaine, *Isidore de Séville. Genèse et originalité de la culture wisigothique au temps des Wisigoths* (Turnhout: 2000), 139.

13 Dell'Elicine, *En el principio fue el Verbo*, 76: liturgy permits the Church to organize society in keeping with its norms.

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were new, like post-baptismal chrismation. He thus strived to enhance not only clerical superiority on the laity, but also internal hierarchy among the clergy.[14]

2.2 *Constructing a Church at the Level of the Kingdom*

It is possible to argue that the verticalization of the Church is a long pre-existing tendency, with beginnings well before Isidore's time, flourishing during the Carolingian era and culminating in the Gregorian reform of the 11th century.[15] Nevertheless, the construction of a discrete ecclesiastical unit on a scale greater than that of a province represents a new undertaking. Although Isidore does not make explicit any desire to construct a brand-new ecclesiastical unit (innovations are not usually presented overtly in the early Middle Ages), some of his efforts certainly point in that direction. Adapting the organization of the Church to the political structure of the day seems logical enough if we consider the considerable extent to which both spiritual and temporal functions assigned to ecclesiastic and civil officials were intertwined during this period.

One indicator of the inclusion of a new level spanning the kingdom of the Goths in the organization of the Church is the preeminent judiciary function Isidore seems to have assigned to the see of Toledo, beyond any "conventional" ecclesiastical structure. Shortly after 615, he called upon Bishop Helladius of Toledo to judge a bishop of Cordoba, originally from the clergy of Seville—probably Agapius, to whom there will be cause to return:

> We have learned that a Sevillian bishop in the Cordoban church has fallen from the great height of his station into the sins of the flesh and has lowered himself from the summit of [episcopal] honor into the depth of turpitude by a deplorable fall. Since the pastoral responsibility (*sollicitudo pastoralis*) falls on you, and divine judgement has decided that the errors of those who fail are to be dispelled by your judgement [...], we most tearfully beg your holiness to receive this sinner before your holy gathering, to hear his confession, and to remove him from the priesthood by a synodal sentence.[16]

14 Séjourné, *Le dernier père de l'Église*, 102.

15 Mayeur et al., *Histoire du christianisme*.

16 "Cognouimus enim Espalensem Cordubensis ecclesiae sacerdotem in pontificali culmine carnali labe dilapsum et de altitudine honoris in profundo flagitiorum flenda ruina dimersum; et quia uobis solicitudo pastoralis incumbit, uestroque iudicio delinquentium errore discutiendos censura diuina disposuit [...] cum effussione lacrimarum uestram sanctitatem deposcimus, ut idem lapsus sancto cetui uestro praesentatus, agnito a uobis

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Toledo, capital of the Visigothic kingdom, was at the time incontestably the metropolis of the province of Carthaginiensis.[17] But the synod to which Isidore appealed must have operated above the metropolitan level, since the metropolitan bishop of Baetica (the province in which Cordoba was located) was Seville. The *sollicitudo pastoralis*, which, according to Isidore, fell to Helladius, was not the metropolitan function, but a superior responsibility, either one Isidore was trying to establish or a pre-existing one to which he appealed. This case recalls the ambiguous nature of the Toledo Council of 597 (Ramos-Lissón called it "pluri-provincial"[18]), which has come down to us only in the *codex Emilianensis*. It contains but two canons, of which one precisely concerns sins of the flesh by ecclesiastics, as in Agapius's case, and the context in which it was held, neither provincial nor general, is not clear. It is not impossible that, at the turn of the 7th century, before it even took on the privilege of ordaining all the kingdom's bishops (at the Twelfth Council of Toledo in 681), Toledo already exercised in practice a judicial function, perhaps based on the fact that bishops from across the kingdom occasionally spent time in the capital. This Toledan *sanctus coetus* (holy assembly) could have functioned as a superior court to the provincial council, rather like the Permanent Synod of Constantinople.[19] Whether or not such a superior synodal tribunal already existed during Isidore's time, sending the bishop of Cordoba to appear before Helladius, a move that may equally have been driven by political considerations,[20] served to legitimate Toledo's overarching authority and prepared the way for the see's exceptional future status.[21]

While the letter to Helladius of Toledo leaves some questions unanswered, in contrast, Isidore's attempt to institutionalize two kinds of conciliar assemblies, at the provincial level and that of the whole kingdom, seems much

confessionis elogio, sinodali sententia a gradu sacerdotii deponatur," Isidore, *Epistola ad Helladium episcopum*, W. Gundlach, ed., *MGH Epistolae*, vol. 3: *Epistolae Merowingici et Karolini Aeui*, vol. 1 (Berlin: 1892), 661.

17 Abilio Barbero, "Las divisiones eclesiásticas y las relaciones entre la Iglesia y el Estado en la España de los siglos VI y VII," in *La historia en el contexto de las ciencias humanas y sociales, Homenaje a Marcelo Vigil Pascual* (Salamanca: 1989), 169–89.

18 José Orlandis and Domingo Ramos Lissón, *Die Synoden auf der Iberischen Halbinsel bis zum Einbruch des Islam* (Paderborn: 1981), 129.

19 The residence in turn of suffragan bishops alongside the metropolitan of Toledo became obligatory in 646 (VII Toledo, 6). See Juan F. Rivera Recio, "El encumbramiento de la sede toledana durante la dominación visigoda," *Hispania Sacra* 8 (1955), 3–34; Martin, *La géographie du pouvoir*, 242–53.

20 See *infra*.

21 There has been some controversy among scholarship about the "primacy" attained by the see of Toledo after 681; see summary in Martin, *La géographie du pouvoir*, 246–47.

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clearer. Councils were, in this case, no longer considered solely as a higher judicial venue, but rather as an instrument for the collective government of the Church.[22] Provincial councils which brought together the suffragans and the metropolitan bishop were well established by the start of the 7th century, and in all probability, as a cleric in Seville Isidore had participated in the council that his older brother Leander had called in the city in 590. But he was clearly responsible for establishing operating rules for provincial councils at the Toledo council of 633, as well as for introducing some modifications to conciliar functions as metropolitan of Baetica.[23] For the Fourth Council of Toledo not only recalled the Third Council of Toledo in 589, which laid down that councils should occur on an annual basis,[24] but also mandated that they be called together on a set day, 17 May, and granted them a role as courts where cases involving bishops, agents of the king, and powerful laypersons could be adjudicated.[25] Canon four gives the first version of the *Ordo de celebrando concilio* (Order to be followed in celebrating councils), which concerned provincial councils, as the ceremonial activity is centered on the metropolitan and his archdeacon. It is not easy to evaluate the distance between norm and practice in this first statement of Isidore's vision of government by council. The surviving acts reveal that only four provincial councils met between 633 and 711.[26] It certainly would be questionable to imagine, in the absence of textual evidence, that after the celebration of the Fourth Council of Toledo, the metropolitans systematically convoked a provincial council in every year in which a general council was not called, in keeping with canon three. However, the opposite extreme, the idea that the extant collections of conciliar deliberations might have transmitted the canons of all of the assemblies of bishops held in Visigothic Spain, also seems extremely dubious.[27] If, in fact, the impact of Isidore's project on later practice is hard to gauge, it can at least be noted, without forcing the sources, that there is a great contrast between the proceedings of the Second Council of Seville in 619, the only complete provincial council presided over by Isidore of which the entire record has come down to us, and

22 Pablo C. Díaz, "Concilios y obispos en la península ibérica (siglos VI–VIII)," *Settimane di studio* 41 (2014), 1123.

23 Rachel L. Stocking, "Martianus, Aventius and Isidore: Provincial Councils in Seventh-Century Spain," *Early Medieval Europe* 6.2 (1997), 174–76. Stocking describes the "rigidification" of conciliar practice in 633.

24 III Toledo, 18, which already eliminated the twice-yearly convocation ordered at Nicea and, unlike IV Toledo, did not distinguish among various kinds of councils.

25 IV Toledo, 3. See Stocking, "Martianus," 179.

26 Stocking, "Martianus," 187.

27 For more on this, see Séjourné, *Le dernier père de l'Église*, 119.

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the proceedings of the other provincial councils convoked following the Third Council of Toledo in 589. The brevity of the earlier is in contrast to the richness and the rigor of the council of 619, including its extensive citations of Scripture and elements of Roman law, and its adherence to Roman judicial procedure.[28]

But canon three of the Toledo gathering of 633 also institutes another kind of council, a general council, bringing together the bishops of the Visigothic kingdom in an alternative way, depending on the purpose:

> If the issue is a question of faith or another common cause of the Church, a general council of all Hispania and Gaul will be convoked. However, when neither faith nor the common interests of the Church is in question, it will be a special [*speciale*] council of each province, wherever the metropolitan will choose to hold it.[29]

The canon notably defines the jurisdiction of the general council as "all Hispania and Gaul," rather than by listing ecclesiastical provinces, which would have been more tedious but no doubt better suited to the definition of the terms of a general council. Indeed, the formulation "all Hispania and Gaul" corresponds to the limits of the *regnum gothorum*, although the Visigothic kingdom is not referred to explicitly. The canon refers to two geographic units, rather than ecclesiastical districts or political demarcations. Such a choice may be explained by the desire to locate the general council on a universal basis (*totius Hispaniae*) comparable to an ecumenical council, without drawing attention to the novelty of its founding principle. It should also be noted that the Third Council of Toledo of 589 had already adopted these geographic units in 589, perhaps upon the suggestion of King Reccared.[30]

In hindsight, the Third Council of Toledo in 589 can certainly be classed among the general councils of the Church of the Visigothic kingdom, although the category had at this moment not yet been established. It seems that the concept of the general council had its roots in Isidore of Seville's reflection on

28 Díaz, "Concilios y obispos," 1119.

29 *Conc. Tol. IV*, c. 3: "[…] ita tamen ut, si fidei causa est aut quaelibet alia ecclesiae communis, generalis totius Spaniae et Galliae synodus conuocetur: si uero nec de fide nec de communi ecclesiae utilitate tractabitur, speciale erit concilium uniuscuiusque prouinciae, ubi metropolitanus elegerit peragendum."

30 Reccared's speech at III Toledo had required the recitation of the Apostles Creed every Sunday in "all the churches of the Hispaniae and Gaul" ("omnes Spaniarum et Galliae ecclesiae": Martínez Díez and Rodríguez, *La colección*, 5:101a), a measure the second canon of the gathering promulgated for "all the churches of Hispania, Gaul and Galicia," III Toledo 2.

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practice (the Third Council of Toledo ratified the conversion of the Gothic *gens* to Catholicism, a paramount "question of faith" and relating directly to the common interests of the Church), and in his desire to systematize and rank the various mechanisms that he had put in place for the government of Church. The distinction seems not to have been fully developed in his mind in 619, for the twelfth and thirteenth canons of the Second Council of Seville, devoted to the duality of the nature of Christ, would have been more appropriately the subject of a general council. The general council as an instrument of Church government, which would become a characteristic of the Visigothic regime in the mid to late 7th century, can therefore be seen as the result of Isidore's latest reflections about the government of the Church in the early 630s. Unlike the provincial councils, which do not seem to have been adopted widely, the practical success of the idea of general councils can hardly be questioned.

Finally, Isidore's desire to construct an ecclesiastical edifice that incorporated the level of the *regnum* can be seen in his efforts to unify the liturgy of Hispania. In doing so, his efforts were congruent with developments beyond Hispania and his precise lifetime, which resulted in the late antique liturgy, at first very variable, becoming more and more fixed and codified in the 6th and 7th centuries. In Hispania, the council of 633 is a watershed, for that gathering devoted a large number of canons to the unification of the liturgy in a way that broadly reflected the order of subjects treated in Isidore's *De Ecclesiasticis Officiis*, as much that of the first book on ritual as of the second on the officers.[31] However, it seems possible once more to detect an evolution in Isidore's thought between the *De Ecclesiasticis Officiis*—written between 598 and 615 according to its editor, or even in 598, before he was bishop, according to Jacques Fontaine[32]—and the end of his life. One of its chapters, "On the various practices of the Church," shows a remarkable tolerance for diverse forms of observance as long as they do not contradict either faith or morals, and even envisages respect for local practices as the best source of protection against schism.[33] Canon two of Toledo IV declares slightly different intentions:

> We have decided that [...] henceforth we will do nothing diverse or discordant in the sacred things of the Church so that our diversity might not be presented as a schismatic error to those who are ignorant or those who

31 Séjourné, *Le dernier père de l'Église*, 138–39.

32 Fontaine, *Isidore de Séville. Genèse et originalité*, 201.

33 Isidore, *De ecclesiasticis officiis* 1.44: "Quod enim neque contra fidem neque contra mores bonos habetur indifferenter sequendum, et propter eorum inter quos uiuitur societatem seruandum est, ne per diuersitatem obseruationum scismata generentur."

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> judge according to the flesh [*carnales*], and so that the diversity of churches may not cause the fall [*scandalum*] of many.[34]

In both these cases, schism is the major danger that the Church should avoid, but the *De Ecclesiasticis Officiis* distinguishes two kinds of observances: those which are practiced "by the whole universe," or were set forth by the Apostles or the "major councils," and those which vary from church to church, like the Saturday fast or the frequency of communion, local variations that were of minor importance. What matters is following the customs of "those among whom one lives," so as not to "scandalize" them (cause them to fall). In Toledo in 633, in contrast, scandal and the danger of schism are said to have their origins in "the diversity of churches," whatever its nature. The solution proposed by the bishops (including and led by Isidore) was the unification of the whole liturgy. There could no longer be more than one *ordo orandi atque psallendi*, one way of praying and saying the psalms, one *modus in missarum solemnitatibus*, a single ritual for the mass,[35] as also for the services in the evening and in the morning. Just as for the general councils, the scale of reference is now "all Hispania and Gaul" (*omnem Spaniam atque Galliam*). But here the bishops did not prudently restrict themselves to geographical notions, as the decisive word *regnum* appears in the justification: "so that henceforth ecclesiastical custom may not vary among us who are united by a single faith in a single kingdom."[36] Until then there had been attempts at unification of the liturgy at the level of the ecclesiastical province,[37] but applying such changes to the whole kingdom constitutes what Paul Séjourné has termed "a notable innovation."[38] The council finally supported this innovation by invoking canonical authority: "for earlier canons also decided that each province (*prouincia*) should follow the same usage in saying the psalms and administering religious services."[39] Multiple meanings of *prouincia* may be in play here, as in the 6th century the term might mean a provincial district dating back to Roman

34 IV Toledo, 2: "[…] placuit ut […] nihil ultra diuersum aut dissonum in ecclesiasticis sacramentis agamus, ne qualibet nostra diuersitas apud ignotos seu carnales schismatis errorem uideatur ostendere, et multis existat in scandalum uarietas ecclesiarum."

35 So the following canons, 11 to 18, apply to this unification of the mass.

36 IV Toledo, 2: "… nec diuersa sit ultra in nobis ecclesiastica consuetudo, qui una fide continemur et regno."

37 For example, the first canon of the council of Gerona (517).

38 Séjourné, *Le dernier père de l'Église*, 142–43.

39 IV Toledo, 2: "[…] hoc enim et antiqui canones decreuerunt, ut unaquaeque prouincia et psallendi et ministrandi parem consuetudinem teneat."

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times (and therefore also an ecclesiastical province) or the territory of a sovereign,[40] thus reducing this innovation to no more than respect for the canonical letter. Religious unity, as ordered by the canon within the framework of *prouincia*, can thus be understood as operating at different scale levels. Nevertheless, moving the determination of the date of Easter (canon five) from the purview of the metropolitan, as had been the custom, to a prior agreement of all the metropolitans of the kingdom, is an example of the change of scale that took place in 633.[41]

Why did the Fourth Council of Toledo support such a change? Beyond the issue of scandal[42] and schism feared by the bishops, what was at stake was not merely the unity of the Church, but, according to Rachel Stocking, the governability of the kingdom. The "program of consensus" put forth on the level of the kingdom of Toledo sought to make conciliar decisions executable and so to assure the survival of the *regnum*,[43] a concept, we should recall, understood by clerics not only as a political construct, but also as having metaphysical dimensions.[44] Then again, application of this attempted unification of the liturgy was by no means swift. In 675, the Eleventh Council of Toledo once again asked bishops and abbots to put an end to the variations of religious services within the province.[45] In practice, until the time of Julian of Toledo (680–90), each church seems to have had a system of *libelli*, a few pages bound together containing the contents of one celebration or another,[46] easy to spread over a diocese but leading also to a degree of disorder, in the absence of a single established ritual for all Hispania. We are forced to conclude that Toledo IV issued a kind of "order of unification" without really enforcing it.[47] At least Isidore of Seville can be credited with having opened the way towards greater standardization from a theoretical point of view.

40 Martin, *La géographie du pouvoir*, 67–68.

41 Ramón Gonzálvez Ruiz, "La obra de unificación litúrgica del Concilio IV de Toledo," in *Hispania Gothorum. San Ildefonso y el reino visigodo de Toledo. 23 enero - 30 junio 2007. Toledo, Museo de Santa Cruz* (Toledo: 2007), 269–84.

42 The word *scandalum*, which must be understood in its Christian sense, "that which causes a fall," appears four times in the acts of 633; Rachel L. Stocking, *Bishops, Councils and Consensus in the Visigothic Kingdom, 589–633* (Ann Arbor: 2000), 156ff.

43 Stocking, *Bishops, Councils and Consensus*, passim; Stocking, "Martianus," 186.

44 Martin, *La géographie du pouvoir*, 321ff.

45 XI Toledo, 3: "Ut in una prouincia diuersitas officiorum non teneatur."

46 IV Toledo, 26: "Quando presbyteres in parrociis ordinantur, libellum officiale a sacerdote suo accipiant."

47 Gonzálvez Ruiz, "La obra de unificación," 281.

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3 Guaranteeing the Quality of Ecclesiastical Mediation

As a builder of institutions, Isidore could not concentrate all his efforts on ecclesiastical structure while neglecting the quality of the building blocks. After all, clerics, mediators of the sacred, had a crucial responsibility to the laity and took responsibility for the salvation of all God's people who had no means to access His Law by themselves: "The Apostles Creed and the Our Father are like the whole Law for the little people (*paruuli*) of the Church, and suffice them to attain the celestial kingdoms."[48] The seeming laxity with regard to the laity, at least to the simplest or most "childlike" among them (like *iuniores* or *seniores*, more commonly used, the word *paruulus* designates a social group using an age metaphor), in contrast demanded much of those leading them, the *praepositi Ecclesiae*,[49] who were expected to be able unhesitatingly to guide the laity on the true path. This position implied that the clergy needed to be trained and overseen.

3.1 *Training the Clergy*

The problem of clerical illiteracy had already been discussed at the Council of Narbonne in 589, which forbade the ordination of illiterate priests or deacons, prescribed forced instruction for those who had been ordained in spite of their ignorance, and punished resistance to learning with enclosure in a monastery.[50] The Fourth Council of Toledo (633) approached the same problem in the higher ranks of the Church. Its canon nineteen repeats from earlier canons the numerous conditions closing access to the episcopate and denying ordination to "those who could not read,"[51] certainly to priests, but above all to bishops. The ability to read was, however, only the most elementary level of the education that Isidore expected of clerics, and in particular of all those upon whom fell the *regimen animarum* (government of souls).[52] For, as canon 25 of the council of 633 indicates, "Ignorance, mother of all errors, is to be avoided above all among the priests of God."[53] Priests and bishops (it should be recalled that the word *sacerdos* does not distinguish between the two) should know Scripture and the canons so as to be able to preach and edify the faithful.

48 "Fidei symbolum et dominica oratio pro tota lege paruulis ecclesiae ad caelorum regna sufficit capescenda," Isidore, *Sententiae* 1.21.

49 Isidore, *Sententiae* 3.33–35.

50 Canon 11 of the Council of Narbonne (589).

51 IV Toledo, 19: "[…] non promoueantur ad sacerdotium […] qui inscii litterarum sunt."

52 Isidore, *Sententiae* 3.33.

53 IV Toledo, 25: "Ignorantia mater cunctorum errorum maxime in sacerdotibus Dei uitanda est."

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Holiness unsupported by knowledge would profit only the prelate himself, whereas by his learning and his words he could instruct his flock and confront his adversaries.[54] The priest sent to serve a parish beyond the city walls, necessarily far from his bishop, would therefore receive from him a *libellum officiale*, a sort of aide-memoire replacing the support of the best trained ecclesiastic of the diocese for his duty of ruling souls and celebrating worship.[55] Despite this focus on the role of the priest, Isidore's own efforts as a teacher were focused on the bishop.

Episcopal schools are attested in Hispania as early as the Second Council of Toledo in the first third of the 6th century. What this teaching consisted of has been described in diverse ways. According to Pierre Riché, it was entirely religious, without a trace of liberal arts, in both Hispania and in Gaul.[56] Jacques Fontaine, however, has found instances of educated Hispanic bishops who seem not to have been trained in monastic schools (the last bastion of the *artes* said Riché).[57] Whatever prevailed in episcopal schools in the 6th century, the instruction that Isidore sought for pastors of souls in the early 7th century was very far from being limited to a purely religious content, as other chapters in this volume demonstrate.

A review of the whole of Isidore's works gives a clear idea of his program of clerics' training, which was certainly implemented at least in the episcopal school of Seville. The primacy he gives grammar puts us at once in the realm of the liberal arts, where grammar is the first step.[58] Moreover, the first three books of the *Etymologies* give a complete view of the *trivium* and the *quadrivium*, and were to a great extent the instrument of their transmission in the Middle Ages in the West, as Jacques Fontaine reminds us.[59] Some of Isidore's other works are, as one might expect, devoted to biblical exegesis, especially *De Ortu et Obitu Patrum*, the *Mysticorum Expositiones Sacramentorum*, or the *De Fide Catholica contra Iudaeos*. The *Prooemia* are, in the view of Jacques Fontaine, an unfinished collection of rather disorganized notes which might have been an introductory course in the Bible, given at Seville's episcopal school. The dedication to "Orasius" of the *Allegoriae*, another minor work of exegesis, might be intended for Aurasius of Toledo, which would suggest that it was

54 Isidore, *De ecclesiasticis officiis* 2.5.16.

55 See n. 46 above.

56 Pierre Riché, *Éducation et culture dans l'Occident barbare. VIe–VIIIe siècles* (Paris: 1962).

57 Fontaine, "Fins et moyens de l'enseignement."

58 See José Carracedo Fraga's chapter in this volume.

59 Fontaine, *Isidore de Séville et la culture classique dans l'Espagne wisigothique* (Paris: 1959). For more on the *Etymologiae*, see Jacques Elfassi's chapter in this volume.

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transmitted to be used in an episcopal school other than that of Seville.[60] Other treatises, like the *Book of Numbers* or the *De Natura Rerum,* associate exegesis with profane learning, following a procedure Isidore often uses. His three major grammatical treatises, *Differences*, *Synonyms,* and *Etymologies*, also bring together Christian content and a profane approach.[61] The relatively uncomplicated language of the *Synonyms* has been interpreted, we should note, as a sign of Isidore's desire to place it within the reach of not only of his episcopal colleagues, but also a broader public, including priests.[62] If there is no proof of use of his historical works (the *Chronicle*, *De viris illustribus*, *De Origine Gothorum*) for training the clergy in the Visigothic kingdom, still, Braulio of Zaragoza's reference to them in his *Renotatio* should be noted.[63] Finally, in Jacques Fontaine's view, we should consider Isidore's *De Ecclesiasticis Officiis* a real "reference book" intended for all Christians but especially for bishops, those who presided over the *officia* in the double sense of services (book 1) and ecclesiastical functions (book 2).[64] In some passages Isidore speaks familiarly to the reader, whom one can imagine as an episcopal colleague.[65]

It may seem futile to attempt an assessment of Isidore's program for the education of clerics. Admittedly, as late as 675, canon two of the Twelfth Council of Toledo deplores the ignorance of the provincial clergy. Granted, all of Isidore's works were not uniformly well known in Hispania, episcopal schools functioned more or less well, depending on the personality of the bishop in charge of them, and the levels of training of many members of the rural clergy probably left much to be desired. Be that as it may, assessing the cultural level of a kingdom by the measure of one of its great men (the "Isidorian Renaissance") seems thoroughly outdated.[66] In any case, once again, written sources are far too patchy for us to conclude failure or success.

3.2 *Supervising the Supervisors*

The quality of the supervision of the faithful is not merely a function of the education of the clergy but also of their orthodoxy and their behavior.

60 Fontaine, *Isidore de Séville. Genèse et originalité*, 196.

61 Fontaine, *Isidore de Séville. Genèse et originalité*, 173.

62 Jacques Elfassi, "Introduction," *Isidori Hispalensis episcopi. Synonyma*, CCSL 111B (Turnhout: 2009), X.

63 Braulio of Zaragoza, *Renotatio librorum domini Isidori*. It should be recalled that Braulio was probably not Isidore's student at the Seville school, José Carlos Martín, ed., *Scripta de uita Isidori Hispalensi episcopi*, CCSL 113B (Turnhout: 2006), 73–89.

64 Fontaine, *Isidore de Séville. Genèse et originalité*, 201.

65 For example, Isidore, *De ecclesiasticis officiis* 1.12–13.

66 See Graham Barrett's chapter in this volume.

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Affirmation of the true faith and the fight against heretical clergy were Isidore's constant preoccupations, perhaps originating in his youth spent in a world politically dominated by Visigothic Arians, before the conversion in 589.[67] In this sense, the major profession of faith which opens the Fourth Council of Toledo recalls the very long canon thirteen of the second provincial council of Baetica, held in Seville in 619, on Christ's double nature. A key moment in Isidore's fight against heresy, as Braulio stresses,[68] was the affair of the *Acephali* that provoked canon thirteen of the Second Council of Seville as well as the preceding canon: "on a certain bishop of the *Acephali*."[69] The synod in Seville "purged" the Monophysite errors of the Syrian bishop in question, known as Gregory, and obtained an orthodox profession of faith from him. Isidore's choice of the unusual adjective *acephalus* is not an innocent one; he also uses it remarkably often in his chronicle.[70] According to the *De Ecclesiasticis Officiis*, the *Acephali* in his view are not so much heretics as impostor clerics, having neither leadership nor discipline, failing to respect Church hierarchy, in opposition to those who lived as they ought under the direction of bishops.[71] One should maybe understand that in his mind the verticality of ecclesiastical structures was the best guarantor of doctrinal purity, so that a commentator should not impose a clear distinction between these two problems. Some years later, two canons of the Fourth Council of Toledo were directed against the Arians. The first, mentioned above, bars former Arians from the episcopate,[72] formally reversing thus the integration of Arian bishops into the ranks of the Catholic episcopacy that had occurred in 589.

The other canon takes the position opposite that of Martin of Braga (*De trina mersione,* a letter of unknown date) and prescribes simple immersion for baptism so as not to seem to recognize the Arians' triple immersion, until then the practice of some Hispanic Catholics too.[73] This relative rejection in 633 of solutions adopted in the previous century certainly owes much to the preoccupations of Isidore, who devoted extended chapters of his *Sentences* to heresy[74] at about the same time (at least if we accept, with Pierre Cazier, that this is a very

67 See Purificación Ubric Rabaneda's chapter in this volume.
68 Braulio of Zaragoza, *Renotatio librorum domini Isidori*.
69 II Seville 12.
70 Séjourné, *Le dernier père de l'Église*, 97: Isidore "sees *Acephali* everywhere."
71 Isidore, *De ecclesiasticis officiis* 2.3.1.
72 IV Toledo 19.
73 IV Toledo 6. For that reason, Gregory the Great, *Epistula* 1.41, had approved the decision of Leander of Seville to avoid the triple immersion practiced in Rome.
74 Isidore, *Sententiae* 1.16 and 17(16). See Fontaine, *Isidore de Séville. Genèse et originalité*, 239.

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late work).[75] The question of the number of baptismal immersions is at the intersection of dogma and ritual, and bishops were supposed to oversee the ritual practice of rural clerics, according to the Fourth Council of Toledo. This oversight was supposed to occur at least twice a year: when the parish priests came to the provincial council or to litanies, they were to report to the bishop how they celebrated mass and administered baptism;[76] the prelate was also supposed to go out to inspect his clergy, by making a yearly tour through his diocese.[77] But the primary functions of the provincial council and the bishops' tour were to oversee and correct the discipline of the clergy, for which the bishop was the guarantor, as canon three of the Fourth Council of Toledo in 633 recalls.[78] The bishop was to see to it that the clerics in his diocese respected the duties and prohibitions enumerated at length in the chapter devoted to them in the *De Ecclesiasticis Officiis*, "On the rules pertaining to clerics,"[79] while applying to himself (under the oversight of the metropolitan and the council) equivalent or more demanding conditions.[80] The Fourth Council of Toledo repeats some essential points of discipline punished by deposition and penitence in a monastery: from young boys up to the bishop, members of the clergy must respect the rule of chastity, which in some cases did not exclude legitimate marriage;[81] they were strictly forbidden to seek the advice of diviners or magicians;[82] they were not to shed blood, either in passing sentence for capital crimes (in the case of bishops) or by participating in armed sedition;[83] they were not to disturb sepulchres.[84]

A final subject of surveillance of priests and even bishops is the preservation of the interests of churches against their own resident clergy, easily tempted to confuse the goods they were in charge of with their property. The Third Council of Toledo in 589 was already concerned with bishops' exactions from their

75 *Contra*, for a much earlier date for the *Sententiae*, see José Carlos Martín, "Une nouvelle édition critique de la *Vita Desiderii* de Sisebut, accompagnée de quelques réflexions concernant la date des *Sententiae* et du *De uiris illustribus* d'Isidore de Séville," *Hagiographica* 7 (2000), 127–80.

76 IV Toledo 26.

77 IV Toledo 36.

78 IV Toledo 3: "Nulla paene res disciplinae mores ab ecclesia Christi depulit quam sacerdotum neglegentia qui contemptis canonibus ad corrigendos ecclesiasticos mores synodum facere neglegunt."

79 Isidore, *De ecclesiasticis officiis* 2.2: *De regulis clericorum*.

80 Isidore, *De ecclesiasticis officiis* 2.5: *De sacerdotibus*.

81 IV Toledo 21–24 and 42–44.

82 IV Toledo 29.

83 IV Toledo 31 and 45.

84 IV Toledo 46. The canon alludes to "public laws" punishing this crime by death, two laws of the *Liber Iudiciorum* (*Leges Visigothorum* 11.2.1–2).

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parishes following complaints to this effect.[85] Similar complaints can be seen to have persisted in the 7th century, as the Second Council of Seville (619) forbade bishops from destroying or despoiling monasteries in their diocese,[86] and the Fourth Council of Toledo protects family foundations against bishops, even though it assigns their management (*ordinatio*) to them.[87] Finally, another canon limits bishops' tendency to free ecclesiastical slaves before their death, since such actions impoverished their church. These manumissions would benefit the bishops in the afterlife and harmed the church that had been confided to them; they were to be annulled by their successor, unless the Church had been compensated from the bishop's personal fortune.[88] To sum up, Isidore wished a particularly close watch to be taken on the orthodoxy of the clergy, their fulfillment of ritual, and the protection of the churches with which they were entrusted.

4 God's Church and Human Quarrels

One of the major obstacles to perfecting the ecclesiastical system imagined by Isidore was probably a function of the political nature, in the broader sense of the term, of the 7th-century Church. The Church was then a human organization with a role in the management of public affairs and in which power relations were at work that interfered with those of the great families and factions of the realm. In this setting, the repression of clerics' disciplinary infractions, especially of the defaming sin of the flesh (*carnalis labes*), cannot be seen as merely a theoretical matter. In some cases it must also be understood in the light of possible conflicts within the Church itself. The judicial function of conciliar assemblies, as well as the fact that canons were sometimes adopted in response to real-life problems, allow us a rare insight into two cases which point to this kind of conflict—in which a bishop was deposed by Isidore or at his urging. The first is the case of Agapius of Cordoba, mentioned earlier. The Second Council of Seville (619) specifically mentions him as being responsible for the usurpation of certain episcopal functions by the priests of the diocese,[89]

85 III Toledo 20.

86 II Seville 10.

87 IV Toledo 33.

88 IV Toledo 67. In 656, X Toledo was to annul the will of Bishop Ricimir of Dumio, who had freed 500 ecclesiastical slaves.

89 II Seville 7: "Septimo examine relatum est nobis uenerantissimum quondam Agapium Cordobensis sedis episcopum frequenter presbyteres destinasse, qui absente pontifice altaria erigerent, baselicas consecrarent […]."

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without, for all that, condemning him, since he was no longer a bishop in 619.[90] That Agapius should have made such a mistake is not surprising as, untrained in Church matters, he had been named directly (*statim*) from secular service (*militia saecularis*[91]) to the priestly ministry,[92] which means he had not received in succession all of the ecclesiastical ranks. Offspring of an illustrious Visigothic family,[93] Agapius (II) was named to his position after 597 and before 612, no doubt appointed by King Witteric (603–10) to oversee Cordoba, an important city that had recently been in rebellion.[94] The need to assert his power may have led Agapius to depose some clerics unjustly or for political rather than strictly disciplinary reasons. The council of 619 presents the case of the priest Fragitanus, stripped of his position and exiled by the bishop of Cordoba "although he was innocent" and "he was sentenced by tyrannical power, not canonical authority."[95] It seems likely that Agapius was appointed in the context of the factional struggles affecting Baetica, of which Fragitanus's expulsion was one episode.[96] Isidore's letter to Helladius of Toledo asking him to depose an unnamed bishop by sentence of the synod, as analysed earlier, most certainly refers to Agapius, who would thus have been unseated for having committed "sin of the flesh" between 615 and 619, during the reign of Sisebut. He was replaced by Honorius, who sat at the Second Council of Seville.[97]

90 He is termed "once (*quondam*) bishop of Cordoba" by the canon; moreover, Bishop Honorius subscribes to the acts for the see of Cordoba.

91 The "military" origin often ascribed to Agapius of Cordoba comes from a loose translation of this expression, which may refer either to civil or to military service. See Céline Martin, "Hiérarchie et service dans le monde visigothique: la *militia* des laïcs," in *Hiérarchie et stratification sociale dans l'Occident médiéval* (*400–1100*), eds. D. Iogna-Prat, F. Bougard, R. Le Jan (Turnhout: 2009), 325–41.

92 II Seville 7: "[…] quod quidem non est mirum id praecipisse uirum ecclesiasticis disciplinis ignarum et statim a saeculari militia in sacerdotale ministerium delegatum."

93 *Passio sancti Zoili Cordubensis* 4: "[…] quidam uir nobilis ex Uisegotorum propagine, clarus genere, Agapius nomine […]." On the connections and the contradictions between the Council of Seville and the later Passion of Saint Zoilus, see Pedro Castillo Maldonado, "Inventiones reliquiarum en la Hispania tardoantigua: análisis de sus actores," *Polis* 16 (2004), 35–44.

94 Luis A. García Moreno, *Prosopografía del reino visigodo de Toledo* (Salamanca: 1974), 251–52; in his view the object of this appointment was to counter the influence of Isidore's family in Baetica.

95 II Seville 6: "potestate tyrannica non auctoritate canonica."

96 Pedro Castillo Maldonado, "In ecclesia contra ecclesiam. Algunos ejemplos de disputas, violencias y facciones clericales en las iglesias tardoantiguas hispanas," *Antiquité tardive* 15 (2007), 270.

97 Castillo Maldonado, "Inventiones reliquiarum," 41–43.

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The second case, concerning Martianus of Astigi (modern Ecija), is more complex. He was deposed by a council of Seville whose acts have not come down to us (like those of the Toledan synod that probably deposed Agapius). It is nonetheless generally accepted, after Paul Séjourné,[98] that the same canon of the Third Council of Seville (probably held sometime between 622 and 624) is the origin for the canons later integrated into the Hispana (the canonical collection that transmitted the Hispanic canons prior to 711).[99] Another cleric from Astigi, Aventius, had succeeded Martianus, who could not appeal, as he was imprisoned. When the case was reopened in 638, after Isidore's death, some irregularities became apparent, including the fact that Aventius had sought false witnesses against Martianus.[100] The case is clearly part of the factional struggle within the city.[101] Still, the role played by the metropolitan seems crucial: he did not uncover these irregularities at the time of the first trial; he accepted Martianus' return to his rank, but not to his episcopal see at the Fourth Council of Toledo, over which he presided in 633;[102] and his death alone permitted the deposition of Aventius two years later. As Rachel Stocking stresses, Isidore of Seville's intervention changed a factional episode into a problem of Church government. The resulting discomfort with the extended failure of the Church to take care of the matter is indicated by the disappearance of the acts of Seville III, which remained lost at the time of the 638 retrial, possibly because Isidore did not include them in his probable revision of the Hispana.[103]

5 Conclusion

In all these different ways, Isidore endeavored to construct a stronger Church for his own times and beyond: enhancing its verticality, creating the ecclesiastical level of the kingdom, training and supervising the clergy so the flock would be correctly attended. Yet, far from playing the part of an impartial observer, Isidore also took sides in the factional quarrels that shook Baetica in his time—to what extent is hard to know. And yet again, he was capable of

98 Séjourné, *Le dernier père de l'Église*, 30–32.

99 Martínez Díez and Rodríguez, *La colección*, 5:482–85.

100 *Exemplar iudicii inter Martianum et Aventium episcopos*: J.C. Martín, ed., "El *Iudicium inter Martianum et Habentium episcopos* (a. 638): Estudio, edición y traducción", *Habis* 49 (2018), 139–74.

101 Castillo Maldonado, "In ecclesia contra ecclesiam," 275.

102 An inglorious half-measure. See Stocking, "Martianus," 173.

103 Stocking, "Martianus."

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transmuting such conflicts into guidelines intended to organize a solid Church government, often by resorting to the most "modern" resources of Roman law.[104] A full assessment of his role in the construction of the Church of Hispania must focus as much on his factional biases as on his creative actions.

Translated by Marian Rothstein

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104 Fregarius's reinstatement as priest (II Seville 6) was based on the Codex Justinianus (3.22.6), which legal experts long insisted was unknown in the kingdom of Toledo; see Séjourné, *Le dernier père de l'Église*, 107.

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CHAPTER 11

Living a Christian Life: Isidore of Seville on Monasticism, Teaching, and Learning

Pedro Castillo Maldonado

1 Introduction

Given the context of an overwhelmingly Christian milieu in which he lived, Isidore's wisdom could only be understood as extraordinary.[1] It was destined to guide the souls—"*Ars est artium regimen animarum,*" in the words of Pope Gregory the Great,[2] who had a profound influence on Isidore.[3] It was Braulio who urged Isidore to send him a copy of the *Etymologiae* (*c*.632), as he regarded Isidore's talent as a divine gift which must be shared and distributed as spiritual nourishment for salvation, wisdom, and knowledge.[4] Isidore perfectly fulfils these requirements. Far from the figure of the anonymous sage secluded in his ivory tower, he made an important impression on both the Church and the Visigothic state, known as Isidore's "*tutela*" (guardianship) over the Visigothic kingdom.

Isidore carried out an arduous mission as a religious and social leader, part of which was a vast plan of ecclesiastical reforms after a decade of turbulence, the 580s. Such reforms were considered essential if a confessional Catholic state was to be attained following the Third Council of Toledo in 589. Isidore's main goal was the optimal training of the consecrated persons. In an institutionalized church, it was no longer sufficient for its members to live a life of integrity (and the ideal of purity was very far from reality at the time). In

1 In what follows, church councils will be cited according to the following system: numeral followed by name of city hosting the council (edition); e.g. III Toledo 3 (ed. Martínez Díez and Rodríguez) refers to the third canon of the Third Council of Toledo in the edition of Martínez Díez and Rodríguez. Two editions of church councils are cited in this chapter: Gonzalo Martínez Díez and Félix Rodríguez, eds., *La colección canónica hispana*, 6 vols (Madrid: 1966–2002); and José Vives, ed., *Concilios visigóticos e hispano-romanos* (Barcelona: 1963).

2 Gregory the Great, *Regula Pastoralis* 1.1.

3 See Jamie Wood, "A Family Affair. Leander, Isidore and the Legacy of Gregory the Great in Spain," in *Isidore of Seville and his Reception in the Early Middle Ages. Transmitting and Transforming Knowledge*, eds. Andrew Fear and Jamie Wood (Amsterdam: 2016), 45–48.

4 Braulio of Zaragoza, *Epistola* 5, 41–43.

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particular, the main aspiration was to homogenize the different orders culturally in order to prepare them for their specific functions.

If a bishop's main duty was to teach, Isidore asks himself: how can one teach what one has not learned? As a result, the bishop's first obligation is to study the Scriptures and the canons.[5] Isidore was very well aware of the irregularities that an ignorant bishop could generate without the proper training.[6] Similar challenges faced the rest of the ecclesiastical ranks, mainly those who were in charge of preaching and liturgy. According to Isidore, it was utterly unacceptable to ordain illiterate priests.[7] It was then that he promoted a norm demanding that the clergy know how to read at least the *manuale* or *liber missarum*, which the priests would receive upon being ordained to work in rural churches.[8] Already during the Third Council of Toledo in 589 this norm had been established, if not word for word, at least in spirit. That same year, bishops gathered in Narbonne ruled that no priest or deacon would receive an ordination if he did not know how to read; and those who had been ordained illiterate had to learn to read immediately. In case of resistance, the priest in question would lose any sort of allowance and would be confined to the walls of the monastery under the authority of an abbot.[9] Naturally, monasticism is not exempt from these reforms. Isidore's doctrine and course of action regarding monastic life affect mainly organization and discipline, but also the education and spiritual life of monks.

2 Isidore's Monasticism

In order to understand the nature of Isidore's teachings in this field we should begin from two apparently contradictory but actually very complementary personality traits: Isidore's contemplative vocation, and a life of pastoral responsibilities in his position as bishop. Destined for the bishopric, he longed

5 Isidore, *Sententiae* 3.35.1a-b; Isidore, *De ecclesiasticis officiis* 2.5.12–17.

6 Isidore participated in the synod that oversaw the case of Agapius of Cordoba, who had become a priest straight from the military and was illiterate: II Seville 7 (ed. Vives).

7 Isidore, *De ecclesiasticis officiis* 2.7.4.

8 IV Toledo 26 (ed. Martínez Díez and Rodríguez). Similarly, right education was the responsibility of every individual: accents, the correct inflections and, in general, a deep knowledge of texts were essential: Isidore, *De ecclesiasticis officiis* 2.11.2. On this topic, see Michael Richter, "Oral communication," *Settimane di Studio* 52 (2005), 454–55, 465–67.

9 Narbonne 11 (ed. Vives). However, the bishops gathered at the Eighth Council of Toledo in 653 recognized that the number of ignorant priests was far too high and established prerequisites such as knowledge of the psalter, the songs and hymns, and how to administer baptism, VIII Toledo 8 (ed. Martínez Díez and Rodríguez).

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for the secluded life of a monk—the monk he never was.[10] It is even very probable that with time his longing for a monastic life was exacerbated. In one of the few passages in which Isidore expresses intimate feelings he appears to be overwhelmed by all his responsibilities.[11]

Isidore's contemplative vocation takes us back to his early years as a youth. Leander, his older brother, previously a monk and then bishop of Seville, played a very important role as Isidore's tutor.[12] Whether or not Leander personally trained Isidore as his private teacher in a monastery or in the episcopal school—distinctions that are questionable—[13] what is certain is that Isidore received an archetypal monastic education. For instance, it is very likely that Isidore imagined that mealtimes would never lack books, to be expected in a refectory, just as had been established at the Third Council of Toledo.[14] It is not by chance that he emphasized the character of monks in the biographical entry he dedicated to Leander.[15] But Leander is not just any monk; he is cultured and well-equipped intellectually. Unquestionably, part of his tutelage would be the instruction of his brother.[16] Therefore, Isidore received a moral and religious education, but secular subjects and the classics were also part of the curriculum.[17]

This formative period marked Isidore's personality for the rest of his life. Lauded already as "preceptor" of the kingdom, in 633 he regulated the destiny

10 As demonstrated by Julio Pérez Llamazares, "¿San Isidoro de Sevilla, monje?" in *Miscellanea Isidoriana* (Rome: 1936), 39–55. The last noteworthy attempt to turn Isidore into a monk is by Justo Pérez de Urbel, *San Isidoro de Sevilla. Su vida, su obra y su tiempo* (León: 1940).

11 Isidore, *Sententiae* 3.34.3b. This is how Bishop Caecilius of Mentesa retired to a monastery, Sisebut, *Epistula ad Cicilium Mentesanum*. Isidore, *Sententiae* 3.33.3, however, considers the bishopric a divine plan that he has no option but to fulfil.

12 Leander of Seville, *De institutione uirginum* 31.11.

13 Jacques Fontaine, "Fins et moyens de l'enseignement ecclésiastique dans l'Espagne visigotique," *Settimane di Studio* 19, (1972), 145–202 and 213–02. On the few differences regarding instruction in episcopal and monastic schools, the case of Fructuosus is noteworthy: having earlier been introduced to monasticism, he developed his profession in the school of Bishop Conantius of Palencia, *Vita Sancti Frutuosi.* 2.8–10.

14 III Toledo 7.

15 Isidore, *De viris illustribus* 28.2–3.

16 Manuel C. Díaz y Díaz, "Isidoro el hombre," in *San Isidoro. Doctor Hispaniae* (Seville: 2002), 73. The bishop of Merida received his nephew, Fidelis, whom he instructs with the utmost dedication, although the succession is actually assured through a more efficient means, economic blackmail, *Vitas Sanctorum Patrum Emeritensium* 4.4.1–7 and 17–23.

17 Isidore showed off his excellent memory –*recordatio ueteris lectionis*– cultivated through long hours of *lectio* and *meditatio.* See Jacques Fontaine, *Isidore de Séville et la culture classique dans l'Espagne wisigothique*, 3 vols, 2nd ed. (Paris: 1983).

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of youths living among the clergy, presumably drawing from his own youthful experiences: let them live close to the church under the same roof—in a community, as it was in the monasteries—educated within the ecclesiastical discipline and under the tutelage of an elder. If they were orphans, they should be protected under the guidance of the bishop.[18] A century earlier, the Second Council of Toledo (531) had mentioned schools under episcopal supervision. In these schools, under the watchful eye of the bishop, those who entered from a very early age learned from an elder who was commissioned for this task, as in a monastery.[19]

This fondness for monastic life has been traditionally dealt with as something of secondary importance in the life of Isidore, overshadowed by his role of polymath and ecclesiastical and social leader.[20] His contemporaries appear to have constructed this vision. An anonymous monk compares Fructuosus with Isidore. He expressed that Isidore, with his diligence and in his writings, has taught about the external, whereas Fructuosus illuminated the inner contemplative life.[21] In my opinion, this is a rather obtuse view of Isidore because almost all his writings are permeated with monastic spirituality. Monasticism is not a main theme in his literary production, yet it is scattered in many of his works,[22] and as a result, as we will see, it is not restricted to the monastic life.

18 IV Toledo 24 (ed. Martínez Díez and Rodríguez). This tutelage was not only formative; it was also to protect his patrimony. In fact, at the time of his death, Isidore still possessed the family's inheritance. On this topic, see Pedro Castillo Maldonado, "La muerte de Isidoro de Sevilla: apuntes de crítica histórico-hagiográfica," *Habis* 32 (2001), 577–96.

19 II Toledo 1 (ed. Martínez Díez and Rodríguez) regulates *scholae lectorum*: children of up to eighteen years of age received an education that would equip them as readers (later they would make a vow of chastity, and two years later they would have access to the subdiaconate). See the interpretation of this canon in Manuel C. Díaz y Díaz, "Problemas culturales en la Hispania tardorromana y visigoda," in *De la Antigüedad al Medievo: siglos IV–VIII. III Congreso de Estudios Medievales* (Madrid: 1993), 23 and n. 51. Naturally, the immediate objective is to learn letters but the fact that the children were meant to be under the care of a superior testifies to the religious nature of the education they received. On the position of the superior, see Eustaquio Sánchez Salor, *Jerarquías eclesiásticas y monacales en época visigótica* (Salamanca: 1976), 205–09. The fact that the act of entering is accompanied by prayer gives us an idea of the nature of this education: *Liber Ordinum* 7.

20 Perhaps because Isidore did not develop a systematic monastic theology. However, there is no shortage of notes on the topic, e.g. Ursicino Domínguez del Val, *Historia de la Antigua literatura hispano-cristiana*, vol. 3 (Madrid: 1998), 404–05.

21 *Vita Sancti Fructuosi* 1.13–14.

22 Jacques Fontaine, "La vocation monastique selon saint Isidore de Séville," in *Théologie de la Vie Monastique. Études sur la Tradition patristique* (Paris: 1961), 353–69; Adalbert de Vogüé, *Histoire littéraire du mouvement monastique dans l'antiquité*, vol. 11 (Paris: 2007),

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His first writings already attest to his interest in monasticism. In the *Differentiae* Isidore develops the distinction between two ways of life, contemplative and active. Whoever desires to come closer to the first one should begin by committing to the "study" of the second.[23] This is an idea he reiterates throughout his work: one must purify oneself through good deeds before setting out to live the ascetic life. Therefore, he sets forth a plan of spiritual progression, under the influence of Gregory, in which contemplation is granted a superior value.

The *Synonyma* also transmit the typical spirituality of one who values monastic life.[24] Besides the dichotomy between *negotium* and *contemplationis otium*, Isidore presents a *norma uiuendi* of ascetic conduct. Idleness leads to lust, whereas work tires the body, and reading, meditation, and continuous prayer conquer temptations.[25] Isidore suggests that the reader, "whomever he might be," as the words of his prologue indicate, follows a set of precepts very similar to the ones observed by monks.

However, we are dealing with a theoretical proposition, as Isidore, an experienced bishop, knew very well. Isidore's pragmatic component prevails by descending from the *desiderata* to the pragmatic. Isidore is conscious of the various categories, which he carefully records in *De ecclesisticis officiis*. Each ecclesiastical office has its own dangers, moral demands, and duties. With respect to the monks, prayer, reading, dialogues, vigils, fasts, and work must constitute their daily activities. These undertakings shall take place in accordance with and under the paternal leadership of the abbot.[26] As for physical asceticism, food would be scarce, given that its sole purpose was to meet the most basic needs. Nuns would guard their virginity through isolation. Being a measured and learned man both on the subject of ascetic literature and its practical application, he points out a risk: many monks boast about their ascetic discipline, and so they seek out fame, praise and honour.[27]

105–65; Paula Barata Dias, "L'ideal monastique, les moines et les monastères du monde wisigothique selon Isidore de Séville," *Antiquité Tardive* 23 (2015), 143–54.

23 Isidore, *Differentiae* 2.32.

24 Jacques Fontaine, "Isidore de Séville auteur ascétique: les énigmes des Synonima," *Studi Medievali* 6 (1965), 163–95; Attilio Carpin, "Itinerario spirituale isidoriano: dal peccato alla virtù," *Sacra Doctrina* 48.5 (2003), 82–145.

25 Isidore, *Synonyma* 2.18–19.

26 We know something of the nature of this government thanks to hagiographical reports of the fate of a drunk monk: after verbal reprimands, there were beatings, fasts, and confinements, *Vitas Sanctorum Patrum Emeritensium* 2.20–24 (CCSL 116:15).

27 Isidore, *De ecclesiasticis officiis* 2.16.18.

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Isidore's pragmatism was finally enforced in his pastoral activity at councils, cemented in the councils II of Seville (619) and IV of Toledo (633). Here, he tried to protect and promote the cenobitic phenomenon by following the path his brother had set before him in the Third Council of Toledo in 589. Besides considering monasteries as places of penitence for the clergy, the Second Council of Seville addressed monasticism in two of its canons. In the first place, it ordains that monasteries must not be damaged or dissolved, with a special cautionary tone against bishops who try to do so.[28] This is the typical defence of the economic independence of Visigothic monasteries.[29] Secondly, the council decreed male *tuitio* over female monasteries. Nuns would be led by monks both in economic matters—and this caution is important in order to subordinate the nuns doctrinally—and in the building itself. Finally, he insisted that convents must be located far from monasteries.[30] Leander had already stressed the need to avoid all contact between nuns and monks, given both sexes naturally burn like fire and tow.[31]

The Fourth Council of Toledo, convened during a delicate political situation,[32] was intended to unify both liturgy and ecclesiastical discipline. With respect to monasticism,[33] abuse at the hand of bishops was said to be rampant, and so it was stipulated that the power of bishops be limited to disciplining and naming abbots, as well as other aspects of monastic life.[34] At the same time a new measure was approved, giving the monastic movement great momentum: bishops were encouraged to allow the clergy to enter a monastery, if they so desired.[35] Above all, however, the council ruled on the impossibility of abandoning

28 II Seville 10 (ed. Vives).

29 On matters pertaining to patrimony and economy, Pablo C. Díaz Martínez, *Formas económicas y sociales en el monacato visigodo* (Salamanca: 1987).

30 II Seville 11 (ed. Vives).

31 Leander of Seville, *De institutione uirginum* 2.

32 See the chapter by Andrew Fear elsewhere in this volume.

33 Paul Séjourné, *Le dernier Pére de l'Égise: Saint Isidore de Séville. Son rôle dans l'Histoire du Droit Canonique* (Paris: 1929), 211. Some of the canons could have been written by Isidore himself: Manuel C. Díaz y Díaz, "Introducción general," in *San Isidoro de Sevilla, Etimologías*, eds. J. Oroz Reta and Manuel-A. Marcos Casquero, 2nd ed. (Madrid: 1993), 157–58.

34 IV Toledo 51. Nevertheless, IX Toledo 2 (ed. Martínez Díez and Rodríguez), held in 655, complained about bishops committing robberies and stipulated that lay founders of a monastery should be able to name the abbot.

35 IV Toledo 50 (ed. Martínez Díez and Rodríguez). This norm established monks' right to be accepted into the priesthood: Lérida 3 (ed. Martínez Díez and Rodríguez).

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monastic life.[36] The *uagatio* was utterly prohibited[37] because these "wandering monks" are fake or pseudo monks who do not obey episcopal rules and boast of a forced asceticism; they should be secluded in the monastery.[38] Throughout his literary production Isidore could hardly conceal his suspicions about those who live the ascetic life in isolation. In his classification of monks developed in *De ecclesiasticis officiis*, beholden to Jerome, Augustine, and Cassian, Isidore does not conceal value judgements. The list of "positive monks" is headed by cenobites, who are characterized by life in community. These are followed by the hermits, whose ascetic practices he can only admire. The anchorites constitute the third group of monks; they count in their favour their initial training in the monastery.[39] Likewise, in the *Etymologiae*, making a more neutral classification,[40] Isidore points out that the anchorites should achieve preliminary training in a monastery.[41] Isidore favours the monastery as the pinnacle of contemplative life, although he knows that the first monks were hermits.[42] Finally, the Council of Toledo, led by Isidore, seemed convinced about the monasteries' capacity for catechetical instruction: it was to them that Jewish parents should entrust their children,[43] although it was seclusion, isolation, and discipline that made monasteries ideal places to achieve such ends.

However, Isidore's main works on monasticism, which differ in scope and presentation, are without a doubt the *Regula monachorum* and the *Sententiae*. In these he combines his most pragmatic perspective, derived from his capacity as bishop, with the most spiritual, which is marked by his vocation for contemplation.

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36 IV Toledo 49 and 52 (ed. Martínez Díez and Rodríguez). It is impossible to desert the monastery in the same way that the profession itself is irrevocable: Isidore, *Sententiae* 3.22.3. This included oblate children: José Orlandis, *Estudios sobre instituciones monásticas medievales* (Pamplona: 1971), 51–68.

37 IV Toledo 53 (ed. Martínez Díez and Rodríguez).

38 The *Regula Communis* 20.641–43 (CPL 1870) stipulates that those who escaped should be returned with their hands tied to their backs.

39 Isidore, *De ecclesiasticis officiis* 2.16.2–4.

40 Antonio Linage Conde, "Isidoro de Sevilla, De monachis (Etymologiarum, VII, 13)," *Studia Patristica* 13 (1975), 479, although he prioritizes anchorites over hermits.

41 Isidore, *Etymologiae* 7.13.3.

42 This does not mean that the origin of monastic life was not the first Christian community of Jerusalem, Domíguez del Val, *Historia de la antigua literatura latina hispano-cristiana*, 3:402.

43 IV Toledo 60 (ed. Martínez Díez and Rodríguez). We suppose that these children did not come into the monastery as oblates. On the development of a school inside, for those who have been tonsured, and a school outside, for laymen, see Henri-I. Marrou, *Historia de la educación en la Antigüedad*, trans. Y. Barja de Quiroga, 2nd ed. (Madrid: 2004), 429–33.

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3 The Rule for Monks:[44] Norms for Monks

The *Regula monachorum*, written *c*.615–18, is addressed to monks.[45] Isidore refers to it in a letter to Braulio as a notebook, a few pages containing rules.[46] One should not be deceived by such a modest statement. The piece abounds in literary pompousness, employing the writings of Jerome, Augustine, and Cassian.[47] Isidore's intention was to select some norms, as he himself declares, and to do so in a way that was easy to understand, in a rather rustic and accessible style, with the objective of contributing to the preservation and consecration of monks.[48] In sum, it is the work of an astute organizer permeated by disciplinary and instructional regulations.[49]

The organizational and behavioural manual was destined for the monastery *Honorianensis* in particular (its place is unknown), according to the indication given in the *praescriptio* of some manuscripts.[50] Therefore, Isidore gives precise indications to clarify and set order within a monastery over which he definitely had jurisdiction.[51] His text was not meant to replace the usual system of *codex regularum*; rather, it was intended to clarify it.[52] But the norms set by a

44 There is an English translation in Aaron W. Godfrey, "The Rule of Isidore," *Monastic Studies* 18 (1998), 7–29.

45 An effective summary can be found in Adalbert de Vogüé, *Histoire littéraire*, 123–65.

46 Braulio of Zaragoza, *Epistola* 2.

47 Karl S. Frank, "Isidor von Sevilla. Regula monachorum und ihre Quellen," *Studia Patristica* 13 (1975), 461–70; Neil Allies, "The Sermo Plebeius and the Spoken Language in the Monastic Rule of Isidore of Seville," in *In Search of the Medieval Voice: Expression of Identity in the Middle Ages*, eds. L. Bleach, K. Närä, S. Prosser, and P. Scarpini (Newcastle: 2009), 3–18; Neil Allies, "Re-evaluating Monastic Rules: Style and Literary Purpose in the Rule of Isidore," *Downside Review* 128 (2010), 1–18.

48 Isidore, *Regula monachorum*, praefatio 5–9.

49 Manuel C. Díaz y Díaz, "La vie monastique d'après les écrivains wisigothiques (VII[e] siècle)," in *Théologie de la vie monastique. Études sur la Tradition patristique* (Paris 1961), 377. Adalbert de Vogüé, *Les règles monastiques anciennes* (*400–700*) (Turnhout: 1985), 49 outlines three aspects of cultural interest with regards to the rules: relations with the outside world, internal life, and social models. Here, we are interested in internal life and specifically in the making of spiritual asceticism.

50 Manuel C. Díaz y Díaz, "Aspectos de la tradición de la Regula Isidori," *Studia Monastica* 5 (1963), 27–57; cf. Julio Campos Ruiz and Ismael Roca Meliá, eds., *San Leandro. San Isidoro. San Fructuoso. Reglas monásticas de la España visigoda. Los tres libros de las Sentencias* (Madrid: 1971), 81.

51 III Toledo 4 (ed. Martínez Díez and Rodríguez) authorized bishops to transform the churches of deacons into monasteries, as long as the monks abided by one rule.

52 Anscari Mundò, "Il monachesimo nella Penisola Iberica fino al sec. VII. Questioni ideologiche e letterarie," *Settimane di Studio* 4 (1957), 93–97; Isabel Velázquez Soriano, "Reflexiones en torno a la formación de un corpus regularum de época visigótica," *Antigüedad y*

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bishop with jurisdiction had an unquestionably legislative element. In the eyes of monks and their abbot, the line between "consult" and "observe" would surely have been quite blurred. In the same way, given Isidore's position, it is easy to deduce that the rules could be applied to other monasteries too. From this perspective, one could affirm that it is part of Isidore's juridical pastoral, and that it reflects and contributes to the Baetican cenobitic practice of the 7th century.[53]

In the *Regula* Isidore adopts a purely pragmatic posture, conscious of the socio-historical context that was far removed from the one during the heroic times of the first ascetics.[54] As he indicates, it is the path suggested for those who cannot follow the old discipline of the elders.[55] In the same way, Braulio was said to have proposed a virtuous way of life for those of weak will.[56] Isidore's pragmatism leads him to possibilism: he constructs a behavioural guide achievable by the majority, demonstrating awareness of the multiple reasons for entering a monastery and recognizing that it was useless to hope that all monks would possess an extraordinary spirituality and asceticism.

It is difficult to take a stance on the most intimate motivations of those who entered a monastery, but their social origins can enlighten us. The social composition of Baetican monasteries was very diverse. It is evident that they attracted people of great social standing, such as Leander and Florentine, Isidore's brother and sister. In fact, Baetican monasticism, mainly situated in *suburbia*, had always had certain aristocratic and urban elements.[57] Leander in particular was very aware of social hierarchies within monasteries, dictating a more delicate treatment for those who belonged to a higher class outside the cloister. Yet the monastic movement also attracted those belonging to the

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Cristianismo 23 (2006), 531–67. See also José Freire Camaniel, "El Liber Regularum y el Codex regularum del monacato prebenedictino," in *Sub luce florentis calami: homenaje a Manuel C. Díaz y Díaz*, ed. M. Domínguez Garci (Santiago de Compostela: 2002), 350–58.

53 Juan Gil Fernández, "Isidoro como Obispo," in *Isidoro de Sevilla. Doctor Hispaniae* (Seville: 2002), 87. This does not mean that there were not other monastic practices in the region; e.g. *Vita Sancti Fructuosi* 14–15. José Sánchez Herrero, "La regla monástica de san Isidoro y la evangelización," *Nova et Vetera* 20 (1995), 121–37.

54 Regulations established by bishops opened a new phase in Spanish monasticism: Pablo C. Díaz Martínez, "Monasticism and liturgy in Visigothic Spain," in *The Visigoths: Studies in Culture and Society*, ed. A. Ferreiro (Leiden: 1999), 178.

55 Isidore, *Regula monachorum*, praefatio 10–13.

56 Braulio, *Renotatio librorum domini Isidori* 38–39.

57 Luis A. García Moreno, "Los monjes y los monasterios de las Españas tardorromanas y visigodas," *Habis* 24 (1993), 179–92; Francisco Salvador Ventura, "Aspectos sociales en las Reglas monásticas de la Bética," in *La sociedad de la Bética. Contribuciones para su estudio*, ed. C. González Román (Granada: 1994), 495–514.

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lowest strata of society. Leander refers to the virgins who had entered the convent from the humblest of places, saying they should be content, as they were no longer suffering from cold or hunger.[58] Indeed, since its beginnings all kinds of people from negligible origins sought help—spiritual but also material—in the monasteries, and the Visigoths were not exceptional in this regard. Religious zeal notwithstanding, the incentives for those aspiring to enter a monastery had to be concrete: there they would find a certain social prestige and, above all, a minimal level of sustenance and protection in such a context of extreme socio-economic insecurity as 7th-century Hispania. That the only motivation for monastic vocation was religious devotion, at the Fourth Council of Toledo and led by Isidore,[59] is mere *desideratum*.

Another incentive to not discard the monastic life could have been the opportunity it offered for education, and for those of modest origins, as Isidore himself declares, it would have been the only possible avenue to obtain any sort of schooling.[60] Perhaps this was the case of the young Augustus in Merida (a hagiographic character), who was still unable to read.[61] Whoever entered the monastery in this condition would receive an education very similar to the one provided in the aforementioned episcopal schools, but with at least two characteristics that are worth mentioning.

Those who had decided to enter the monastery and receive the tonsure, whether it was by their own choice or that of their parents, could not withdraw; it was a way to ensure the community's stability as well as to avoid possible funding problems. The issue was so transcendental that Isidore indicated in the rules that a promise to remain in a cloister had to be given in writing.[62] Deserting the monastery was utterly impossible. The only way to leave legitimately was to be "promoted" to the office of priest.[63] This is perfectly coherent

58 Leander, *De institione uirginum* 27.

59 IV Toledo 49 (ed. Martínez Díez and Rodríguez).

60 Isidore, *De ecclesiasticis officiis* 2.16.16.

61 *Vitas Sanctorum Patrum Emeritensium* 1.1–6.

62 Isidore, *Regula monachorum* 4.95–97. In one *formula* the new monk promises to remain "within your cells – in the monastery – all the days of my life": *Form. Vis.* 14 (ed. Gil: 111–12). We also have access to records from post-Visigothic times on the entry ceremony, where they insist on making in writing the necessary commitment to remain in the monastery, *L.O.* 29 (ed. Férotin: 82–86).

63 Antonio Linage Conde, *Los orígenes del monacato benedictino en la península Ibérica* (León: 1973), 1:223–24. The bishops gathered at the council of Lérida refer back to the councils of Agde and Orléans when discussing the maintenance of monastic norms. Some monks interpreted cooptation into the clergy as a promotion, e.g. the Gallic hagiographic account in *Vita Patrum Iurensium* 1.6.

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with the organization of monks as a militia and the monastery as its barracks.[64] Baetican monasticism was aristocratic in nature, and for this reason it was subjected to a fierce hierarchical discipline which did not accept any sort of "democratic" government.[65]

More relevant for its implications in education is the fact that, as opposed to the clergy, Isidore does not establish a minimal level of knowledge for entering the monastery.[66] He thought that one becomes a monk by vocation—or in the case of oblate children, by contribution. Therefore, education is something subsidiary, a means and not an end in itself.[67] This consideration has immediate consequences for the monks' education. It is not appropriate to read pagan or heretical authors, Isidore advises.[68] However, when he addresses Christians in general he values the reading of grammarians,[69] and we know very well that Isidore's library was not lacking in books written by pagans or heretics.[70] Yet the ultimate reason is simple: one essentially enters a monastery, not a school.

Nevertheless, once in the monastery a proper education became essential. Cassian had already expressed this necessity, and Isidore, who was familiar with Cassian's writings, concurred. Isidore despised ignorance, from which one could only obtain sin or heresy,[71] and of course he did not write about charismatic ascetics, such as Gregory the Great; rather, he wrote for monks who had to be trained for life in a community as well as to perform ecclesiastical services (monks could be co-opted as clergy, and monasteries could acquire the status of parish).

Illiteracy was of no concern, since the monastery would provide an education upon entry. Isidore stipulates that the instruction of novices would be the

64 Juan Gil, "La normalización de los movimientos monásticos en Hispania: reglas monásticas de la época visigótica," *Codex Aquilarensis* 10 (1994), 11–14. In general, Edward E. Malone, *The Monk and the Martyr: The Monk as the Successor of the Martyr* (Washington, DC: 1950).

65 In Fructuosus we can observe a greater unionization in the direction of the monastery, and this tendency is exacerbated in *Consensoria monachorum* (CPL 1872), Charles J. Bischko, "The date and nature of the Spanish Consensoria Monachorum," *American Journal of Philology* 69 (1948), 377–95.

66 Isidore only institutes a trial period, *in hospitalitatis seruitium*, for three months: Isidore, *Regula monachorum* 4.73–75.

67 This consideration is extended to Christians as a whole. Science, naturally religious, was a means to seek God, and it was more advantageous to live righteously than to possess great knowledge: Isidore, *Sententiae* 2.1.3 and 11.

68 Isidore, *Regula monachorum* 8.217–18.

69 Isidore, *Sententiae* 3.13.11.

70 Isidore, *Versus* 2.

71 Isidore, *Synonyma* 2.65. Instrumentally, Isidore prioritizes grammar: Carmen Codoñer, "La gramática y las artes liberals," *Settimane di Studio* 45 (1998), 1043–49.

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responsibility of an elder whom the abbot had appointed. He would be in charge of teaching the letters and virtues, leaving it up to the rest of the monks to provide a good example.[72] Physical punishment was part of this teaching regime. Isidore alleged that often children would pray not to be beaten in class, and in the *Regula* he commands that errors be chastised with physical punishment, albeit with limits.[73] With regard to the method for teaching reading, if we follow Valerius of Bierzo's philosophy, it essentially consisted in the repetition and memorization of songs.[74] Knowing the Psalms was equivalent to knowing how to read.[75] Although it was a very primary instruction, it was indispensable for gaining access to the Scriptures.

Besides this elementary instruction, Isidore divides the "non-manual activities" of monks between prayers, reading, and conferences (all this without lessening their workload).[76] Prayer and reading were to be executed both in private and in groups. Monks must silently listen, said Isidore, to the preaching of the abbot and respond with quiet moans or tears.[77] In a milieu of limited literacy, as in the Visigothic one, liturgy acquired a fundamental value as a means for oral learning, where memorization was facilitated by repetition and song.[78] Moreover, lectures allow the abbot to shed light on what was read, constituting himself as the sole doctrinal authority in the monastery. The character of community, as opposed to the teachings of the catechumen,[79] encouraged doubts to be raised publicly in order for monks to learn. Finally, conferences, where the monastery's rules were reviewed, would serve to correct vices and establish order.

Each activity had its precise time. The life of monks revolved around the times of their duties, although the rhythm changed according to the season.

72 Isidore, *Regula monachorum* 3.50–52 and 21.541–544. The monks' conduct was not always as exemplary as Isidore would have liked. Fructuosus of Braga, *Regula monachorum* 15.313–25, extends to condemning paedophilia.

73 Isidore, *Sententiae* 3.7.26; Isidore, *Regula monachorum* 18.448–51.

74 Valerius of Bierzo, *Replicatio sermonum a prima conuersione* 11. Valerius had been taught traditionally, as a means of preparing individuals to climb the social ladder that he subsequently despised: Valerius of Bierzo, *Ordo querimonie* 1.

75 Pierre Riché, *De l'education antique à l'éducation chevaleresque* (Paris: 1968), 35–36.

76 Isidore, *Regula monachorum* 6–7. This is further proof of Isidore's practical knowledge. Monks will sing while working to alleviate fatigue: Isidore, *Regula monachorum* 5.149–50.

77 Isidore, *De ecclesiasticis officiis* 2.16.14.

78 Susan Boyton, "Training for liturgy as a form of monastic education," in *Medieval Monastic Education*, eds. G. Ferzoso and C. Muesing (London: 2000), 7–20. In general, we must not magnify the role of written culture in instruction, as the basic learning process is oral: Isidore, *Synonyma* 2.67.

79 Ildefonsus of Toledo, *De cognitione baptismi* 17.303.

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In the summer, reading was done between the third and sixth hours, whereas during the rest of the seasons monks read from the morning until three in the afternoon. Isidore stipulates that during their daily duties, which had a different *ordo* from the other regions, monks should internally meditate on the songs. After vespers came the meditation, or a conference.[80] During mealtime there was also a *lectio diuina*, where together, including new converts and students, the monks would listen to a monk seated at the centre of the refectory. Upon finishing there came the prayer,[81] and then work, reading, or meditation aloud could take place.[82] Three times a week the community came together and in silence heard the preaching of the abbot or an elder whom he had chosen.[83]

Although prayer, reading, and conferences indubitably instruct the monk, they are, above all, ascetic practices. Together with work, they constitute a solution to temptation, as Isidore expressly declared.[84] The monk should have his mind and his work always focused on God, especially in times propitious for sin, such as bedtime: no solution is more effective against the nocturnal pollutions than an adequate posture and constant prayer.[85] Leander had recommended that the nuns pray continuously and read the sacred texts assiduously, even during their work and meals.[86] Nevertheless, knowledge was not counted among the virtues the nuns should treasure. It was not so much the acquisition of knowledge (even Leander omits the discussion on what was read, trusting in general that nuns would be indoctrinated by the abbess) as it was the mandate to keep busy throughout the day. In the end it was necessary that the life of the monk be a succession (without interruption) of reading, prayer, and work in order to avoid idleness and, among other vices, the demon of fornication. In this Isidore coincides with the *Regula Fructuosi*. Fructuosus's norms appear to be especially obsessed with making the monks' schedule a sequence of prayers in order to avoid idleness.[87] For instance, he fixed the second hour as a transition between the first and the third, and ordered that the

80 Isidore, *Regula monachorum* 6.189–92.

81 Isidore, *Regula monachorum* 9.227–32 and 266–67.

82 Isidore, *Regula monachorum* 5.165–66.

83 Isidore, *Regula monachorum* 7.208–12 and 21.528–29.

84 Isidore, *Sententiae* 3.19.5. Obviously, this consideration does not eliminate its function supporting worship and "spiritual dialogue" with divinity: Bernardo R. García Pintado, *Espiritualidad y Lectio Diuina en las Sentencias de san Isidoro de Sevilla* (Zamora: 1980).

85 Isidore, *Regula monachorum* 13.351–69.

86 Leander of Seville, *De instituione uirginum* 16 warns virgins against carnal readings of the Old Testament because the book Song of Songs could arouse temptations.

87 Justo Pérez de Urbel, *Los monjes españoles de la Edad Media*, 2nd ed. (Madrid: 1945), 2:122–23.

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last prayer before going to sleep be the *miserere.*[88] With these practices, *in primis*, both they (Isidore and Fructuosus) sought to form a spiritual rather than intellectual elite.

However, alongside their spiritual and ascetic functions, prayer, reading, and lectures had an indisputable cultural value with consequences in the spiritual and intellectual life of monks. For instance, a most fundamental tool was the library.[89] In the *Regula Isidori* the library was under the custody and responsibility of the sacristy. Monks could take out a codex just after dawn and had to return it immediately after vespers.[90] If this was not done, the monk would have committed a misdemeanour (he would be punished with three days of excommunication, or a flogging in the case of young monks).[91] While the care with which the codices were preserved is evident, Isidore, a lover of books and therefore understanding of the wear and tear incurred due to their constant use, was more severe with other irregularities stemming from an arrogant character that could mar relationships within the community.

Although it was an episcopal library rather than a monastic one, we know of the library in Seville because of Isidore's writings.[92] It allows us to affirm, nonetheless, that Christian authors constituted an overwhelming majority of it, including sacred texts, Christian poetry, Patristic literature, and canons. In the same way, school manuals as well as secular books could also be found on the shelves of the library. Literature of pagan content is mentioned in the *Versus in bibliotheca*.[93] Similar works perhaps could be found in monastic libraries.

88 Fructuosus of Braga, *Regula monachorum* 1.13–17 and 32–38. Thinking of hell and its flames was a technique to extinguish sexual desire: Isidore, *Synonyma* 1.46. .

89 See Louis Holtz, "Vers la création des bibliothèques médiévales en Occident," *Settimane di Studio* 45 (1998), 1059–1106; Guglielmo Cavallo, "La biblioteca monastica come centro di cultura," *Codex Aquilarensis* 3 (1990), 11–21.

90 Isidore, *Regula monachorum* 8.211–13 and 21.509–12. Books are the property of monasteries, and for this reason they are under the care of the sacristy. On the ceremony of ordination of the sacristan and his designation as librarian and leader of the scribes, see *Liber Ordinum* 11.

91 Isidore, *Regula monachorum* 17.402–11.

92 Jacques Fontaine, *Isidore de Séville et la culture*, 735–62; Jacques Elfassi, "Connaître la bibliothèque pour connaître les sources: Isidore de Séville," *Antiquité Tardive* 23 (2015), 59–66. Verses 7–10 of the epigraph allude to this library, José Vives, *Inscripciones cristianas de la España romana y visigoda* (Barcelona: 1942), no. 352. See also Graham Barrett's chapter elsewhere in this volume.

93 Isidore, *Versus* 24–27. The *Regula monachorum* does not mention it, perhaps because they considered the copying of the book as another manual task, destined for the economy of the monastery. See: Guglielmo Cavallo, "Entre lectura y escritura. Los usos del libro en el monacato primitivo y en las fundaciones benedictinas de la Alta Edad media," in *Silos. Un milenio II. Historia*, dir. J.A. Fernández Flórez (Silos: 2003), 131–42; and for Hispania,

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Perhaps we could better appreciate the position Isidore bestows on spiritual asceticism within the monastery if we contrast his norms with the aforementioned *Regula Fructuosi*, written decades later, in the north-east of the peninsula and within a different sociocultural milieu. The *Regula Fructuosi* does not constitute a *vademecum* of how to conduct oneself within the monastery; rather, it is a precise code of ascetic rigour with a clear eastern influence. It talks about prayers, meditation, readings in groups, congregations, and even the reading of the rule itself and the lives of priests. But it does not mention a particular reading exercise or a monastic library. In contrast to this, Isidore bequeaths individual reading an important role in the everyday life of the monk and regulates with precision the functioning of the library. This might be yet another consequence of the aristocratic character of Baetican monasticism, and the personality of Isidore himself. However, always a realist, Isidore warns against a danger: by dedicating themselves to reading some monks aim to evade physical work.[94] The monastery of Isidore was no place for the old intellectual *otium*.

4 The Sentences: Monastic Guidelines for Clergymen and the Population

Together with the rule mentioned above, the *Sententiae* are crucial to gaining a better understanding of Isidore's monastic thought.[95] However, there is a fundamental difference that distinguishes the *Sententiae* from the *Regula*: the former text is addressed to the body of converts and not exclusively to monks.

The *Sententiae* is Isidore's crowning jewel from a spiritual perspective. This spirituality was characteristically monastic, like the *Moralia in Job*, from which he derived great inspiration. The *Sententiae* constitutes a synthesis of his thought, an authentic intellectual testament, if we accept a late dating of creation.[96] Nonetheless, it is not a theological treatise or given to speculation; it is

Jordina Sales Carbonell, "Fabricando pergamino durante la Antigüedad Tardía. Unas notas arqueológicas para los monasterios de Hispania," *Augustinianum* 53 (2013), 469–99.

94 Isidore, *Regula monachorum*, 5.139–40.

95 For this analysis: Pierre Cazier, *Isidore de Séville et la naissance de l'Espagne catholique* (Paris: 1994), and Jacques Fontaine, *Genèse et originalité de la culture hispanique au temps des Wisigoths* (Turnhout: 2000), 235–50.

96 Pierre Cazier, "Les Sentences d'Isidore de Séville et le IVe concile de Tolede. Réflexions sur les rapports entre l'Eglise et le pouvoir politique en Espagne autour des années 630," *Antigüedad y Cristianismo* 3 (1986), 373–85; Pierre Cazier, "Derrière l'impersonnalité des Sentences, aperçus sur la personnalité d'Isidore de Séville," in *De Tertullien aux mozarabes*.

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rather a doctrinal and spiritual manual designed to aid learning and growth.[97] From this perspective it is part of his didactic pastoral project, as his compositional skill and use of persuasive language demonstrates.[98]

Structured in three books, the *Sententiae* include what should be believed and, in turn, known, the process of personal conversion, virtues as opposed to sins, and how one should live life. Isidore concludes with considerations on death, as it is the culmination of the spiritual itinerary previously described: knowledge of the faith, personal conversion, and conversion or collective morality.

The first book is a testament to Isidore's didactic intentions. Disregarding theological disquisitions, it is a doctrinal exposition of the minute, gathering together all that should be known. Nevertheless, Isidore is indebted to a whole cultural tradition, which means that he cannot avoid opposing religious science to pagan and heretical stubbornness. With regards to heresy, he stresses how the Church, initially with a very simple faith, had acquired doctrinal strength.[99]

The first chapter of the second book is dedicated to the wisdom that is based on religious science (and, for this reason, a limited science). Isidore believed that it was not convenient to scrutinize that which surpasses human comprehension.[100] But, above all, this book is centred on the figure of the convert. One should first approach and teach him the fight against the flesh with tenderness, leaving brusqueness for a later time.[101] As we have previously indicated, for Isidore the exercise of an active life—the elimination of vices and doing good deeds—is a prerequisite for the ascetic vocation. In keeping with the character of the text he concludes this book with a vast list of sins.

The third book is the most important given our purpose, and it is the most original. After a few introductory chapters, Isidore addresses the different components of society, each with their own responsibilities and different precepts. In short, he traces a descending scale of perfection corresponding to the

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Mélanges offerts à Jacques Fontaine (Paris: 1992), 2:9–18. Nevertheless, see arguments in favour of the traditional dating of *c.*612–15 proposed by José Antonio de Aldama, in José Carlos Martín, ed., *Scripta de uita Isidori Hispalensis episcopi*, CCSL 133B (Turnhout 2006), 244–45.

97 César Chaparro Gómez, "Tradición y novedad. Teoría y praxis: los proyectos culturales de Casiodoro e Isidoro de Sevilla," in *Actas del XI Congreso Español de Estudios Clásicos* 3, eds. J.F. González Castro et al. (Madrid: 2006), 28–35.

98 It is important to distinguish between Isidore's original intentions and their later reception: Díaz y Díaz, "Introducción general," 134–35.

99 Isidore, *Sententiae* 1.16.5.

100 Isidore, *Sententiae* 2.1.7.

101 Isidore, *Sententiae* 2.8.5.

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different stages of the convert. The first echelon includes monks, and then come the priests and social leaders (the monarch, the judges; the regular people generally appear as an object of the actions of others). Once again, we see that Isidore places the monk at the uppermost level of perfection. According to Isidore, the monastic profession is not without its obstacles; the contemplative life advances in intervals. Therefore, it is the way of life for very few, the chosen ones.[102] Those who are chosen must exceed the general precepts so that those who lead the monks are distinct and superior. Monastic life needs training and a set of specific rules for its preservation. The first command is the separation and disregard for the world.[103] But this renunciation must be accompanied by an interior rejection of pleasures and human nature itself. Always downcast and dispirited as a penitent, the monk should lead a life of reading, prayer, and constant work so as to avoid pernicious idleness.[104]

If we ignore work and concentrate on the "non-manual activities" of monks, says Isidore, prayer results in purification, for which reason it is considered a priority. If not reading, it is preferable to dedicate oneself to prayer, and it should be done with the utmost tenacity, forgetting all worldly matters. There are two types of prayer: the one practiced internally and prayer uttered out loud through the singing of hymns.[105] They are both remedies, as they neutralize the attacks of sensual vices. We are dealing, therefore, with a consideration which is more ascetic than mystical.[106]

Furthermore, reading, preferably the Scriptures, instructs. Isidore was of the opinion that a brief reading in silence is better—*lectio tacita*—than a long one out loud, hence avoiding fatigue.[107] This is so that one interiorizes the text, understands it, but above all remembers it, no longer through one's ears but through one's eyes.[108] Reading is followed by meditation. This word, meditation, should not mislead us. We are not talking about an intellectual reflection, but a repetition or "rumination" of what was read. It is, once again, a method

102 Isidore, *Sententiae* 3.15.1 and 8.

103 Isidore, *Sententiae* 3.17.1–2.

104 Isidore, *Sententiae* 3.19.5.

105 On the importance of hymns, there is a theory that Isidore revised the *Psalterium* and composed an introduction to that effect, the *Expositio in Canticum Canticorum* (CPL 1220): Germain Morin, "La part de Saint Isidore dans la constitution du texte du psautier Mozarabe," in *Miscellanea Isidoriana* (Rome: 1936), 151–63. On individual prayer, Attilio Carpin, "La preghiera in Isidoro di Siviglia," *Sacra Doctrina* 46.6 (2001), 55–114.

106 Isidore, *Synonyma* 2.12–13, urges the faithful to pray incessantly, adding immediately its role as an antidote against the devil.

107 Isidore, *Sententiae* 3.14.8–9.

108 Guglielmo Cavallo, "Scrivere, leggere, memorizzare le Sacre Scritture," *Settimane di Studio* 45 (1998), 1006.

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for memorization. Both reading and meditation should be done assiduously. Isidore believes that even the intellectually weak can attain the divine mysteries through diligent reading, for this is the prize of his efforts. On the contrary, the intelligent person who neglects to read commits sin because of abandonment. As with prayer, together with private reading there are duties within the monastery and mass. Isidore explains how the latter should be received in silence; it is effective for growth and most efficient if the mind thinks of images of the divine things that have just been heard.[109] It is evident that Isidore, without disregarding the nature of praise and "dialogue" with divinity inherent in the liturgy, was very aware of its instructive value. Finally, whoever learns and understands what he read has the best aptitude for communicating it to others.

The third activity, incorporating discussion, dialogue, debate, or conferences, has the purpose of affixing what was learned. It is most useful to clarify doubts. In this respect, Isidore recommends figures of speech. The participants ask questions, but it is not about an intellectual discussion: Isidore emphasizes the importance of avoiding disputes, which can only lead to contentiousness and heresy.[110] A dogmatic authority always monopolizes the conference, avoiding the risk of it turning into a classical-styled *altercatio*. Therefore, it is not a modern seminary where there is democratic confrontation of differing ideas; rather, these processes inculcate dictates under the guise of dialogue. In any case Isidore prefers reading to conferences, perhaps because of its mystical element.

In my opinion it is important to note that Isidore places all these considerations on prayer, reading and conferences immediately before the chapters dedicated to monks. They are a sort of introduction to monastic life. Yet due to their position ahead of the chapters on the different ranks—monks, clergymen, and the faithful longing for perfection—we can deduce that Isidore aimed to propose these practices to the rest of society or at least to the group of believers wanting to attain perfection.[111] This explains why Isidore insists on how to carry out these practices and emphasized their utility, something considered superfluous in the *Regula*, as it was presumably familiar within the monasteries. If they were beneficial for the "professionals of conversion" or monks, they were good enough for the rest of the converts. It was by doing

109 Isidore, *De ecclesiasticis officiis* 1.10.1–3.

110 Isidore, *Sententiae* 3.14.1–6.

111 New converts must become interested in reading and meditating the sacred texts, Isidore, *Synonyma* 2.19.

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these activities that one could attain spiritual perfection. From this perspective, Isidore's anthropology is positive.[112]

In sum, due to his own vocation for contemplation Isidore has the highest regard for monks. He presented an ideal of a life for the believer that was spiritually highly demanding, very similar to that of the monk.[113] From this standpoint we could talk about an authentic "monastic apologetic": Isidore presents the faithful—notably the religious leaders, and to a lesser extent the laypeople, with a treatise that soon becomes a *speculum principis*[114]—, a set of activities that he had learned during his formative years and which are characteristically cenobitic.

The way to perfection is undertaken according to rank. Isidore distinguishes a moral and specific instruction for each member of the ecclesiastical and social body. Let us concentrate briefly on this last aspect: Isidore, pragmatic and conscious of the diverse social categories which he understood as established by divine right, advocated vertical teaching, differentiated and discretionary. It was his understanding that the most venerable should receive instruction before the rest so that through them those who were under their care would in turn be taught sound doctrine. Besides, one must be aware of the nature of the receivers of instruction, just as he recommended that doctors should be according to the sex, age, and profession of their listeners.[115] We must remember that this discretionary instruction had reached its highest level in the *Regula Pastorialis* when Gregory the Great—the main source of the *Sententiae*—offers a long list of methods of exhortation. Likewise, in the *Synonyma* Isidore develops the methods and content of instruction: one must not be obscure when one teaches; one must teach people according to their profession, and—always with respect to religious science—one must teach general things to all, whereas some esoteric matters should be reserved for those who find themselves closer to perfection.[116]

112 Cf. Philippe Delehaye, "Les idées morales de saint Isidore de Séville," *Recherches de Théologie ancienne et médiévale* 26 (1959), 17–49.

113 Patrick J. Mullins, *The spiritual life according to saint Isidore of Seville* (Washington, DC: 1940), highlights the importance of compunction and asceticism—representative elements of penitential and monastic states—in Isidore's thought.

114 The dogmatic genre related to the duties of social leaders was popular; e.g. it is found in some writings attributed to Eugenius II (see the *Appendix Eugeniana* in CPL 1236a and 1239): Manuel C. Díaz y Díaz, "Aspectos de la cultura literaria en la España Visigótica," *Anales Toledanos* 3 (1971), 53–54.

115 Isidore, *Sententiae* 3.43.2 and 7.

116 Isidore, *Synonyma* 2.68–69.

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5 Monasteries: Cultural Hubs and the "Monasticization" of Education

Although, as we have already stated, the acquisition of knowledge was not supposed to be a primary concern for monks, two questions remain: how cultured were the monasteries under Isidore's care? Did the monks take advantage of the libraries in terms of their intellectual development? It is difficult to pronounce with assurance on this point, since we do not know the extent to which his rule was ever applied, geographically or chronologically. It is practically impossible to dissociate the literary production of Visigothic monks and bishops, from the monastery and to the clergy. Besides, the south of the Spanish peninsula seems to have fallen into a cultural lethargy after Isidore. Perhaps it would be more useful to ask about Isidore's influence in the development of Spanish monasteries as cultural centres.

Some monasteries in the Hispania of the 6th century were centres for religious teaching, an important point in the context of the supposed intellectual penury and poor training of the clergy. In fact, it was the monasteries that provided the Church with priests at that time. For instance, it was in the monastery of St Martin that little Vincent (later becoming bishop of Huesca in 557) received his education.[117] It is possible that education was essentially ascetic, but we are facing an indication of monasteries in which young monks were being trained to ascend to clerical orders.[118] We also know of Justinian of Valencia, a monk-bishop educated in the monastery of St Vincent who had a prolific literary output.[119]

During the second half of the 6th century Spanish monasticism acquired true cultural momentum[120] when a group of monks who had fled Africa under the leadership of the abbot Donatus founded the monastery *Seruitanum*. Its bookish culture was undeniable: they arrived with numerous codices, and it was the first monastery to abide by rules—in other words, to have written norms.[121] The abbot Eutropius would be Donatus's successor, an ecclesiastical leader, together with Leander, of the Third Council of Toledo. In his *De octo*

117 Vincent of Huesca, *Donatio* 1.

118 Eustaquio Sánchez Salor, "La cultura en los monasterios visigodos," *Codex Aquilarensis* 3 (1990), 24–25.

119 Isidore, *De viris illustribus* 21. He carried out an important mission as founder and restorer of monasteries, as it is declared on his epitaph (José Vives, *Inscripciones*, no. 279).

120 At the end of the century, Licinianus of Cartagena, *Epistula* 1.5.1–11, argues that it would be impossible for him to continue to meet the demands of Gregory the Great's *Regula Pastoralis*. However, it is very possible that this statement has much rhetoric and, in any case, explains the need to do away with the consideration of monks as clergymen very well.

121 Ildefonsus of Toledo, *De viris illustribus* 3.

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uitiis (CPL 1095), Eutropius demonstrates his broad knowledge, almost acting as a copyist of John Cassian. He does not hesitate to defend in a letter the authority of the abbot and the continuity of monastic rules. Isidore himself judges his text—*Epistula de districtione monachorum et ruina monasteriorom* (CPL 1096)—as being very useful for monks.[122] For his part, John, who was abbot of the monastery of Biclarum before becoming bishop of Gerona, was trained in the East. Besides his renowned *Chronica* he wrote a monastic rule—now lost—that, according to Isidore, was not only necessary for monks but also useful for all those who feared God.[123]

In the 7th century there was a multiplication of monks-bishops and, from the middle of the century, the presence of abbots at synods.[124] Culturally, the cases of John and Tajo in Zaragoza are of great significance. Concerning John, Ildephonsus states that he was more given to preaching than writing, although he created some liturgical texts and—importantly, because it indicates a level of secular knowledge—a method for calculating the date for Easter.[125] In relation to Tajo, Braulio qualifies him as an inveterate re-reader, since as an abbot he dedicated himself to the "*ocia sancta.*"[126] Yet, indubitably the best example of a monastery as a great cultural centre is Agali, which supplied Toledo with bishops, some of them famed for their literary production.[127] Eugenius I is another interesting figure, as he initially received a monastic education. He was transferred thereafter to the priesthood, where he received a new ecclesiastical instruction. He also stood out because of his knowledge of astronomy, a science which was popular in the 7th century, possibly because of its focus on heaven or because of the prevalent interest in eschatology in this century.[128]

I believe we should concede Isidore, recognized as an intellectual and, since the mid-7th century, an *auctoritas* in the schools,[129] a relevant role within this cultural landscape. Isidore attempted to institutionalize a formative function

122 Isidore, *De viris illustribus* 32. Domínguez del Val, *Historia de la antigua literatura latina hispano-cristiana*, 2:361–70. The material on which Isidore drew was mainly derived from Africa.

123 Isidore, *De viris illustribus* 31.

124 Charles J. Bischko, "Spanish abbots and the Visigothic Councils of Toledo," in *Humanistic Studies in honor of John Calvin Metcalf* (Charlottesville: 1941), 1:139–50; José Orlandis, "Abades y Concilios en la Hispania visigótica," *Antigüedad y Cristianismo* 3 (1986), 221–24.

125 Ildefonsus of Toledo, *De viris illustribus* 5.

126 Braulio of Saragoza, *Epistula* 42.10–15.

127 Manuel C. Díaz y Díaz, "La obra literaria de los obispos visigóticos toledanos: supuestos y circunstancias," in *La patrología toledano-visigoda* (Madrid: 1970), 45–63.

128 Ildefonsus of Toledo, *De viris illustribus* 12.

129 As demonstrated by some poetry of Eugenius II of Toledo, which was directly connected with the *Etymologiae*, e.g. Eugenius of Toledo, *Carmina* 39.

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already present in the Spanish monasteries of the 6th century, and he became a mainstay of the cultural horizon of the 7th century.[130] These monasteries, together with bishops, would be the continuators of Isidore's role as saviour or renovator of the classical culture, as emphasized by his colleague, confidante, and earliest biographer, Braulio.[131]

More certain is the place of honour reserved for Isidore with regards to the instruction of the people of Iberia in the 7th century. We have already spoken about the training that he prescribes for the clergy and monks,[132] only differentiated according to the particularities of cenobitic life and specific functions of each clerical ministry. Yet clerical education and monastic education share a principle: they require literacy. In this regard Braulio points out that the ascetic Aemilian (deceased in the year 574) had merely been able to memorize—perhaps he did not know how to read—the first eight psalms when he had been put in charge of a rural church.[133] The literacy Isidore tried to impose is modest, but it is important to commend what we could call "professionalization," which was possibly quite demanding for the standards of the time.[134] Despite the efforts of Isidore and his posthumous reputation, we must not forget that the aforementioned cultural enlightenment was propelled by a minority of erudite clergymen, all of them abbots and bishops.

It is evident that Isidore differentiated between elements of the laity, especially rulers—at least some of them cultured—and the general populace. To King Sisebut Isidore dedicated his *De natura rerum*, where he explains natural phenomena, drawing from texts written by pagan authors yet giving them a

130 On Isidore's project of cultural reform in the 7th century, Jacques Fontaine, "Isidoro di Siviglia e la cultura del suo tempo," in *Seminario Isidoriano di Verona* (Padua: 1979), 3–52; Manuel C. Díaz y Díaz, "La cultura de la España visigótica del siglo VII," *Settimane di Studio* 5 (1958), 813–44.

131 Braulio of Zaragoza, *Renotatio librorum domini Isidori* 3–5. In Hispania there remained a respectable cultural level amongst the elite, as is demonstrated by poetry and its use in education. See Díaz y Díaz, "Aspectos de la cultura literaria," 34–58, and José Carracedo Fraga, "Poesía y poetas en la escuela visigoda," in *Poesía latina medieval* (*siglos V–XV*). *Actas del IV Congreso del Internationales Mittellateinerkomitee*, eds. M.C. Díaz y Díaz and J.M. Díaz Bustamante (Florence: 2005), 93–105. Pierre Riché, *Éducation et culture dans l'Occident barbare. V^e–VIIIe siècles* (Paris: 1962), 345, states that there was nothing comparable in the rest of the Latin West. Cf., Pierre Riché, *Les écoles et l'enseignement dans l'Occident chrétien de la fin du Ve siècle au milieu du XIe siècle* (Paris: 1979), 12–46.

132 On his religious and intellectual training, see Justo Fernández Alonso, *La cura pastoral en la España romanovisigoda* (Rome: 1955), 71–118.

133 Braulio of Zaragoza, *Vita Aemiliani* 5.12.

134 IV Toledo 19, held in 636, rules that anyone who is incapable of reading—*deinceps*—cannot become a bishop.

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Christian allegorical interpretation.[135] The monarch, who complains about having to complete an activity that takes up all of his time (just like Isidore),[136] responds with a poem-letter on eclipses. It is not an exchange between like-minded individuals on intellectual grounds, but Isidore does compliment the king on his originality and literary knowledge.[137] By showing his awareness of (Christianized) classical culture to the Visigothic monarch, Isidore only alludes to the religious instruction of the populace: to the uncultured people one must teach simple things.[138] For them, the infants of the Church, it was sufficient to know the symbol of faith and Sunday prayer.[139]

However, Isidore's proposed instructional programme for the clergy and monks could have had important consequences for the educational level of the population at large. At the monastery of Merida, children were taught under the influence of monk-pedagogues.[140] But it is in rural areas where this educational activity acquired a special relevance.[141] Monasteries, and perhaps to a lesser extent rural churches, were in charge of taking Christianity (or Christian education) to the countryside.[142] Here, the intention was that monks

135 See Andrew Fear, "Putting the Pieces Back Together. *Isidore and De Natura Rerum*," in Fear and Wood, *Isidore of Seville and his Reception*, 75–92; and Mary Beagon, "Variations on a Theme. Isidore and Pliny on Human and Human-Instigated Anomaly," in Fear and Wood, *Isidore of Seville and his Reception*, 57–74.

136 Sisebut, *Carmen de eclipsibus solis et lunae* 4–9.

137 Isidore, *De natura rerum*, praefatio 1.1–2. See Giovanni Gasparotto, "La Epistula di Sisebut a Isidoro di Siviglia nel contesto culturale del mondo visigotico di Spagna," in *De Tertullien aux mozarabes*, 2:57–67. Vincenzo Recchia, *Sisebuto di Toledo: il Carmen de Luna* (Bari: 1971), 204–11, suggests that the king had a vocation for contemplation, a result of a monastic education.

138 Isidore, *Sententiae* 3.43.4b. Obviously, this does not imply that Isidore lacks a social sensibility (as one can remark in his directions to the monarch and *potentiores*).

139 Isidore, *Sententiae* 1.21.1–2; IV Toledo 10 (ed. Martínez Díez and Rodríguez).

140 *Vitas Sanctorum Patrum Emeritensium* 2.60–62. The difference between being under the discipline of the superior, as was the case with the young Augustus in Merida, and under that of teachers, which could therefore refer to schools outside monasteries.

141 Shortly after Isidore's death, VI Toledo 10 (ed. Martínez Díez and Rodríguez) in 638 and Merida 18 (ed. Vives) in 666 stipulated that the priests teach servants at the rural churches. The so-called parochial schools date back to at least the beginning of 6th century: Francisco Martín Hernández, "Escuelas de formación del clero en la España visigoda," in *La patrología toledano-visigoda* (Madrid: 1970), 77–80.

142 On the character of rural churches, Manuel Sotomayor, "Penetración de la Iglesia en los medios rurales de la España tardorromana y visigoda," *Settimane di Studio* 28 (1982), 639–83. Given the scarcity of these institutions, the Church used monasticism for a series of social functions, including education. On this topic, see Francisco Salvador Ventura, "El monacato como instrumento eclesial de asistencia social," in *La Iglesia como sistema de*

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and clergymen (or monk-priests) taught, paraphrasing Isidore, what they had learned: knowledge intended for religious growth, essentially based on the Bible, hymns, and liturgical books. It is a curriculum based on the *auctoritas* of its sources, and which sets aside the *ratio* (the rational thinking).[143] In this sense, rural priests behave more like an evangelical-catechetical vanguard than teachers. In return, through the *litteratio biblica*, they preserve Latin, written tradition, and some instrumental knowledge, such as arithmetic, as demonstrated by Visigothic notarial acts and the epigraphs on slate boards found in Meseta which show school exercises in writing, accounting registries, and short religious texts.[144]

The result is a strong ecclesiastical or religious imprint of instruction[145] and, in my opinion, one that derives its solid monastic character from its actors, methods, and contents. The phenomenon, driven by Isidore to a great extent, had been established at the time of his death. In the second half of the 7th century the ascetic Valerius of Bierzo taught the son of a nobleman of his region.[146] Traditional education certainly survived, which would not have antagonized Isidore, but it was limited to a select aristocratic minority, possibly linked to the most important cities.[147]

Translated by Geraldine Barandiarán-Muñoz

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dominación en la Antigüedad Tardía, coords, eds. J. Fernández Ubiña, A.J. Quiroga Puertas, and P. Ubric Rabaneda (Granada: 2015), 169–87.

143 Michel Banniard, *Viva voce. Communication écrite et communication orale du IVe au IXe siècle en Occident latin* (Paris: 1992), 181–251.

144 See the chapter by Graham Barrett elsewhere in this volume.

145 Jean Leclercq, "Pedagogie et formation spirituelle du VIe au IXe siècle," *Settimane di Studio* 19 (1972), 255–90.

146 Valerius of Bierzo, *Replicatio sermonum a prima conuersione* 6. Note that Valerius expects a stipend for his lessons, as stipulated in *Leges Visigothorum* 4.4.3.

147 Pierre Riché, "L'enseignement et la culture des laïcs dans l'Occident pre-carolingien," *Settimane di Studio* 19 (1972), 238. Traditionally the treatise *De institutione disciplinae* (CPL 1216) was considered one of Isidore's texts and used as evidence for levels of lay education. But Isidorian authorship has not been proven, and its Spanish origin has been questioned by Manuel C. Díaz y Díaz, "Les arts libéraux d'après les écrivains espagnols et insulaires aux VIIe et VIIIe siècles," in *Arts Libéraux et Philosophie aun Moyen Âge* (Montréal: 1969), 41–42. There are, however, examples of laymen with remarkable culture and of non-ecclesiastical libraries, as in the case of the royal library in Toledo and that of Count Laurentius: Braulio of Zaragoza, *Epistola* 26. On instruction of laypersons as well as religious men see: Manuel C. Díaz y Díaz, "Problemas culturales en la Hispania," 7–32.

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CHAPTER 12

Isidore of Seville on Law and Kingship

Andrew Fear

1 Introduction

None of Isidore's many works takes as its main subject political philosophy or secular law. Nevertheless, given his upbringing under the supervision of his elder brother, the very political cleric Leander, and his own role as a senior clergyman in the Visigothic church after he succeeded Leander as bishop of Seville, it comes as no surprise that he took a strong interest in such affairs. Moreover, his views on these matters were to have an extremely important effect on the development of political thought in Western Europe, though perhaps not in ways that he himself would have either anticipated or desired. Isidore's concern with law and politics is reflected in several of his writings. His most extensive treatment of these matters is to be found in book 3 of the *Sententiae*, which contains an extended discussion of the nature of politics and the duties of a ruler and his subordinates, though shorter, further, and, in terms of their impact on later periods, more important observations are to be found in the *Etymologies*. Moreover, the views on kingship expressed in the *acta* of the Fourth Council of Toledo, which was convened in 633, can also be seen as reflecting Isidore's views, as he presided over this national assembly of bishops held at a crucial moment in the Visigothic kingdom's history.[1]

2 *Fas, ius,* and *leges*

Isidore's political anthropology, like that of his predecessors, Gregory the Great, Cassiodorus, and Augustine, to whom he owes a large intellectual debt, is founded firmly on biblical concepts, but with a strong adjuncture of concepts taken from the classical past.[2] This can be seen in his approach to law. Given

1 José Vives, *Concilios Visigoticos e Hispano-Romanos* (Barcelona: 1963), 186–225, esp. 217–22.

2 For Isidore's debt to Augustine, see José Carlos Martín, "Isidore," in *The Oxford Handbook to the Historical Reception of Augustine*, ed. Karla Pollmann, 3 vols (Oxford: 2013), 2:1193–95. For his debt to Cassiodorus and Gregory, see Jacques Fontaine, *Isidore de Séville. Genèse et originalité de la culture hispanique au temps des Wisigoths* (Turnhout: 2000), translated into

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the *Etymologies*' focus on the meanings of individual words, Isidore first distinguishes between the general concept of law (*ius*) and specific laws (*leges*).[3] Law is then divided into that made by God and that made by Man:

> Now all laws are either divine or human. Divine Laws are congruent with nature, human ones with customs, which is why the latter differ from one another given that different practices please different people. What is 'fas' is divine law, what is 'lawful (*ius*)' is human law. It is *fas* to cross over another's land, but not *ius*.[4]

To complicate matters, Isidore then offers a further threefold definition of law, retaining divine law but subdividing human law into *ius civile* and *ius gentium*. This new definition follows the threefold division of law by the classical Roman jurists and takes its terminology from them.[5] However, Isidore modifies the classical model so that for him *ius civile* marks the practices of a particular group and *ius gentium* the regulation of relations between different groups. Arguably this new definition of the *ius gentium*—the term had been used by the classical jurists to mark practices common to all groups of men—makes Isidore the father of international law as it is understood today.[6]

Isidore's first category of law, which, again, somewhat confusingly given his prior use of *fas*, he is happy to style in conformity with the Roman jurists, *ius naturale*, draws heavily on the classical tradition, though once again with important modifications. Ulpian had defined *ius naturale* as "what nature teaches all animals."[7] He later also states that under natural law all men are free and equal.[8] The right of *possessio naturalis*, use of something without a wish to

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Spanish as *Isidoro de Sevilla: Génesis y originalidad de la cultura hispánica en tiempos de los visigodos*, trans. Miguel Montes (Madrid: 2002), 70.

3 Isidore, *Etymologies* 5.3.1: "Ius generale nomen est, lex autem iuris est species."

4 Isidore, *Etymologies* 5.2.1–2: "Omnes autem leges aut divinae sunt, aut humanae. Divinae natura, humanae moribus constant; ideoque haec discrepant, quoniam aliae aliis gentibus placent. Fas lex divina est, ius lex humana. Transire per alienum fas est, ius non est."

5 See Justinian, *Digest* 1.1.1.2–3.

6 See J. Westlake, *Chapters on International Law* (Cambridge: 1894), 24; E. Nys, *Le Droit International: les principes, les théories, les faits* (Brussels: 1906), 1:54; A d'Ors, "En torno a la definición isidoriana del 'ius gentium'" in *Papeles del oficio universitario* (Madrid: 1961), 278–309. At p. 283 D'Ors describes Isidore's definition as "un paso decisivo para la formación del moderno concepto de Derecho de gentes como Derecho internacional publico," a view endorsed by R. Domingo, *The New Global Law* (Cambridge: 2010), 11.

7 *Digest*, 1.1.1.3: "Ius naturale est, quod natura omnia animalia docuit, nam ius istud non humani generis proprium, sed omnium animalium."

8 *Digest* (Ulpian) 1.1.1.4: "iure naturali omnes liberi nascerentur"; *Digest* (Ulpian) 50.17.32: "quod ad ius naturale attinet, omnes homines aequales sunt."

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become its owner, is also admitted, though this caused some confusion in legal circles.[9] For the classical jurists the law of nature is always equitable and good and derives from the workings of reason.[10] Isidore was happy with the majority of these arguments, though, as a Christian, he saw natural law as derived from God, the source of all good, rather than human reason. As the opening of the *Sententiae* puts it: "the highest good is God," *summum bonum Deus est*.[11] This was not, in fact, as great a deviation from the classical tradition as it may at first seem. For Cicero true law was also of divine origin and existed prior to any man-made dispensation.[12] Isidore firmly excludes animals in his definition of natural law. Such a notion would be incompatible with the account of creation in Genesis, where man is given rule over brute creation.[13] Perhaps again inspired by Cicero, Isidore also adds some points of what he, and we, would regard as natural justice, which can only apply to men. His definition of Natural Law is that this is that which is

> common to all nations, and, because it exists everywhere through the impulse of nature, it is not kept in place by any regulation: it is the union of a man and woman, the bearing and rearing of children, the common possession of all things, one form of liberty for all, and the right to possess whatever is taken from the sky, the earth, or the sea. Also the right of the return of something lent or money deposited, and resistance by force to violence. Now this, or whatever is similar to it, is never held to be unjust, but natural and fair.[14]

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9 Justinian, *Institutes*, 2.1.11–12: "By natural law we obtain the ownership of some things which, as we have already stated, is called the law of nations … Therefore … all creatures that exist on the earth, in the sea, or in the air, as soon as they are taken by anyone, immediately become his property by the law of nations, since whatever formerly belonged to no one is conceded by natural reason (which establishes natural law) to the first person obtaining possession of the same."

10 *Digest* (Paul) 1.1.11: "semper aequum et bonum est ius dicitur, ut est ius natural."

11 Isidore, *Sententiae* 1.1.

12 Divine origin: Cicero, *De Re Publica* 3.22.33 and *De Legibus* 2.4.8; predates man-made law: *De Legibus* 1.6.19.

13 Gen. 1:28, cf. Augustine, *De civitate Dei* 19.15, who makes the point more strongly that the fact that prelapsarian man was made herdsmen of cattle not kings of men shows that he was created free and equal.

14 Isidore, *Etymologies* 5.4.1: "Ius naturale (est) commune omnium nationum, et quod ubique instinctu naturae, non constitutione aliqua habetur; ut viri et feminae coniunctio, liberorum successio et educatio, communis omnium possessio, et omnium una libertas, adquisitio eorum quae caelo, terra marique capiuntur. Item depositae rei vel commendatae pecuniae restitutio, violentiae per vim repulsio. Nam hoc, aut si quid huic simile est, numquam iniustum [est], sed naturale aequumque habetur." Cicero believed that

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Isidore's seeming identification of God with an idealised nature, with law communicated to creation "by the impulse of nature," *instinctu naturae*, was to remain an important part of European legal thinking for centuries. In particular, in the 12th century Gratian of Bologna took Isidore's definitions of law as the starting point in his *Decretum* of Canon Law, whence they became a key aspect of the legal debates of the Middle Ages.[15] During this time they gave rise to the slogan *natura, id est Deus*, "nature—that is to say God." On one level Isidore would have been horrified at the pantheism that some have seen implicit in these words, but on another he would probably have been in agreement, if "nature" is taken to mean that which is pre-existent and non-contingent. After all, we are told that natural law is communicated by natural impulse, and that impulse, Isidore would have argued, is placed in His creation by God. The Isidorean concept of natural law has been attacked harshly by some. "Isidore had a genius for misinforming when he intended to instruct. His definition of natural law is no exception, indeed it may be his triumph in that mode" is, for example, the verdict of Greene. Nevertheless, Isidore's categorisation is as clear, if not more so, than many produced at a later date. Although his work is a crucial part of the transmission of the doctrine of natural law theory to later generations, perhaps his most important legacy in this field was the influence that his definition of this concept had on the thought of St Thomas Aquinas.[16]

Isidore's ideal state is therefore one where all are equal before their creator (*omnium una libertas*) and have equal access to the resources of the earth. What an individual then takes from these resources is his own, and he has a right to its return and a right to resist coercion.[17] Life in the Garden of Eden seems uppermost in Isidore's mind, though the right of resistance suggests that all is not ideal in paradise. It is a life that would now be characterised as that of

self-defence was a natural right, (*Pro Milone* 4.10), along with the right of a man to secure the necessities of life for himself rather than others, though he also notes that natural law forbids self-enrichment at another's expense (see the extended discussion at *De Officiis* 3.5.21–23).

15 For Gratian's debt to Isidore, see: A.P. Monahan, *Consent, Coercion, and Limit: The Medieval Origins of Parliamentary Democracy* (Kingston: 1987), 33–34, 84.

16 For a survey of Isidore's influence, albeit one which is very hostile to him, see R.A. Greene, "Instinct of Nature: Natural Law, Synderesis, and the Moral Sense," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 58 (1997), 175 of this article. Greene appears to be unaware of the theological reasons which led Isidore to exclude animals from his definition.

17 These rights also form the basis of Isidore's definition of a just war at *Etymologiae* 18.1.2, "A just war is one waged after a declaration to restore taken property or in order drive back an enemy" ("Iustum bellum est quod ex praedicto geritur de rebus repetitis aut propulsandorum hostium causa"). The influence of Cicero on Isidore is strong here, see Cicero *De Re Publica* 3.23.

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primitive hunter-gatherers, namely one of simple self-sufficiency. There is no place in Isidorean natural law for either communism or capitalism as the modern world knows them.

3 Law, Politics, and Sin

Yet this primitive, Edenic state exists nowhere, and complex, hierarchical arrangements which have taken away the *una libertas* of natural law are everywhere to be found. Isidore could have drawn the same conclusions from this state of affairs as John Ball did in the 14th century,

> When Adam delved and Eve span, who was then the gentleman? From the beginning all men by nature were created alike, and our bondage or servitude came in by the unjust oppression of naughty men. For if God would have had any bondmen from the beginning, he would have appointed who should be bond, and who free. And, therefore, I exhort you to consider that now the time is come, appointed to us by God, in which ye may (if ye will) cast off the yoke of bondage, and recover liberty.

However, he did not. Instead, taking his lead from Gregory the Great, whose *Moralia* he follows closely here, Isidore argues that hierarchy appeared in man's affairs as one of the consequences of the Fall and that rulers are appointed by God.[18] His key text here is Romans 13:1–2: "Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation."[19] That said, Isidore is in no way an apologist for tyranny, and his views on the

18 See Gregory the Great, *Moralia in Job* 21.22 and *Regula Pastoralis* 2.6. Gregory was a close friend of Isidore's elder brother Leander and had dedicated the *Moralia in Job* to him. It is not surprising therefore to find that he had a strong influence on Isidore's thinking. Apart from this personal connection, Gregory's works were in general much sought after in Visigothic Spain.

19 See also Cassiodorus, *Complexiones in Epistolas Apostolorum*: *Epistola Scti Pauli ad Romanos,* PL 70, 1329: "He [i.e. St Paul] says that we ought to be subject to all powers ordaining justice since power is given by God and he who strives to defy the ordinances of the judiciary is seen to fight against God" ("omnibus potestatibus iustitiam praecipientibus dicit esse debere subiectos quoniam potestas a Deo datur et Deo videtur velle resistere qui ordinationi iudiciariae nititur obviare").

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genesis of politics have served as an important intellectual brake on absolutism.

In the *Sententiae* Isidore makes it clear that politics arose as the consequence of sin and rulers as a product of God's mercy in response to sin.

> Because of the sin of the First Man the penalty of servitude was brought down on mankind by the Godhead and as He saw that *libertas* was unsuitable for some, for these in His mercy He imposed servitude. This came about through the sin of the human race, but God in His equity divided up life among men, making some servants and others lords in order that the license of doing wrong by those who served might be restrained by those lording it over them. For if all were without fear, who would there be who could keep anyone from wrong-doing? And so princes and kings were chosen among the nations so that through the dread they inspired they could restrain their peoples away from evil and through laws coerce them into right living.[20]

This pessimistic view of law-making as something engendered only by necessity is repeated in the *Etymologies*. Here, having posed the question, "Why was law made?" Isidore's reply is that so that "by fear of the laws human audacity might be curbed, innocence be safe amid the wicked, and that among the impious themselves their means of doing harm be restrained through fear of punishment."[21] Isidore also has firm views on the sorts of laws that should be enacted. These are characterized by both idealism and a firm pragmatism. Laws should be "noble, and just" but also "possible, according to nature, according to the customs of the country and befitting their time and place, necessary, useful, and clear so that it contains nothing deceitful through its obscurity, and written not for private advantage but for the common good of all citizens."[22] It is unsurprising that Isidore wishes laws to be good laws; more

20 Isidore, *Sententiae* 3.47.1: "Propter peccatum primi hominis humano generi poena diuinitus inlata est seruitutis, ita ut quibus aspicit non congruere libertatem, his misericordius inroget seruitutem. Et licet per peccatum humanae originis, tamen aequus Deus ideo discreuit hominibus uitam, alios seruos constituens, alios dominos, ut licentia male agendi seruorum potestate dominantium restringatur. Nam si omnes sine metu fuissent, quis esset qui a malis quempiam cohiberet? Inde et in gentibus principes regesque electi sunt, ut terrore suo populos a malo coercerent, atque ad recte uiuendum legibus subderent."

21 Isidore, *Etymologiae* 5.20.1: "ut earum metu humana coerceatur audacia, tutaque sit inter inprobos innocentia, et in ipsis inpiis formidato supplicio refrenetur nocendi facultas."

22 Isidore, *Etymologiae* 5.21: "Erit autem lex honesta, iusta, possibilis, secundum naturam, secundum consuetudinem patriae, loco temporique conveniens, necessaria, utilis,

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important is his insistence that legislation should be practical in its scope, thus eschewing the notion of utopian law-making, transparent in its intent and beneficial for all. His requirement that law be in conformity with *ius naturale* and also congruent with local practice is an equally important point that the essence of law may be refracted in different ways in different places and times. Overall, we see in his outline of good legal practice a devoted Christian, but also an intensely practical thinker.[23]

Given his theological outlook, Isidore holds that the state and its legal apparatus are necessary evils for mankind, designed to check the growth of sin. Secular rulers are a purely negative good, present as an act of divine mercy to alleviate the consequences of wrong-doing. Without the entry of sin into the world, there would be no need for them, and indeed their actions and elevated position would be entirely unjustifiable under the terms of natural law. Isidore spends a great deal of time on the deterrence rulers can effect and is clear that theirs is a good and necessary duty, "Good power is that which, when given by God, coerces the wicked man by fear so that he does not sin rashly." However, he is swift to add to this, "Nothing is worse than to have the power to sin freely, and nothing more unhappy than happiness obtained through acting wickedly." What immediately follows this comment in the text shows that he is thinking not of the ruled but the ruler when making these strictures: "He who exercises his temporal power well in this world, will reign forever and exchange the glory of this world for eternal glory. But those who hold sway wickedly over their kingdom, after their gleaming robes and shining gems, they go down naked and wretched to eternal torment."[24] Perhaps we can detect a note of pessimism

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manifesta quoque, ne aliquid per obscuritatem in captionem contineat, nullo privato commodo, sed pro communi civium utilitate conscripta."

23 Isidore shows himself here to be part of the particularist school of thought, which in England finds its best expression in Edmund Burke, who makes the same point in his "These metaphysic rights entering into common life, like rays of light which pierce into a dense medium, are, by the laws of nature, refracted from their straight line. Indeed in the gross and complicated mass of human passions and concerns, the primitive rights of men undergo such a variety of refractions and reflections, that it becomes absurd to talk of them as if they continued in the simplicity of their original direction," *The Works and Correspondence of the Right Honourable Edmund Burke*, vol. 4: *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (London: 1852), 200–01.

24 Isidore, *Sententiae* 3.48.5b-6: "Potestas bona est quando Deo donante est, ut malum timore coerceat, non ut temere malum committat. Nihil autem peius quam per potestatem peccandi libertatem habere, nihilque infelicius male agendi felicitate. Qui intra saeculum bene temporaliter imperat, sine fine in perpetuum regnat, et de gloria saeculi huius ad aeternam transmeat gloriam. Qui uero praue regnum exercent, post uestem fulgentem et lumina lapillorum, nudi et miseri ad inferna torquendi descendunt."

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in the fact that the just ruler in this discussion is placed in the singular, while wicked rulers are found in the plural. Isidore notes that temptation is greater for kings than their subjects, and thus their fall too can be greater.[25] However, he is even more worried that a wicked ruler will almost inevitably corrupt his people: "For a king who rushes into vice, quickly shows where the path of sin lies. Thus it was said of Jeroboam who sinned and made Israel sin. For whatever ascribed to him was perpetrated by his example by his subjects."[26]

4 The Nature of Kingship

Given his concerns, Isidore is eager to emphasise the solemn obligations of kingship, taking great pains to stress that a king, properly so called, will be a just ruler.[27] As has been seen, he is all too well aware of the temptations that secular power presents and that a ruler may be seduced to abuse his authority. The *Sententiae* dwells on this problem at some length. Isidore begins with the assumption that a truly just man would in fact eschew the world and seek a contemplative life. However, those who assume secular office should do so with due humility. Isidore uses the Bible to underline his point: "This is shown by the example of the Apostle who declined to use the power given to him even for justifiable reasons while he was able to do so, but showed a lowly demeanour in the midst of those over whom he was lord."[28] Kings should be

25 Isidore, *Sententiae* 3.51.5: "The higher the position a man is set in, the greater the danger he runs and the more splendid the height of honour, the greater, if he fails, the sin. Let the powerful powerfully bear their torments for to him to whom more is entrusted, the more will be required from him, including interest upon his sins" ("Quanto quisque in superiori constitutus est loco, tanto in maiori uersatur periculo; et quanto splendoris honore celsior quisque est, tanto, si delinquat, peccato maior est: Potentes enim potenter tormenta patientur. Cui enim plus committitur, plus ab eo exigitur. Etiam cum usura poenarum").

26 Isidore, *Sententiae* 3.50.6: "Nam rex qui ruit in vitiis cito viam ostendit erroris, sicut legitur de Hieroboam qui peccavit et peccare fecit Israhel. Illius autem adscribitur quicquid exemplo eius a subditis." The reference is to 2 Kings 17:22: "And the children of Israel walked in all the sins of Jeroboam which he did; they did not depart from them."

27 Cf. Cassiodorus, *Variae* 8.13: "A good prince is one whom it pleases to speak out for justice and against signs of bestial tyranny" ("Bonus Princeps ile est qui licet pro iustitia loqui et contra tyrannicae feritatis indicium").

28 Isidore, *Sententiae* 3.48.1: "Vir iustus aut omni potestate saeculari exuitur aut, si aliqua cingitur, non sub illa curuatur ut superbus tumeat, sed eam sibi subicit ut humilior innotescat. Probatur autem hoc apostolico exemplo, qui datam sibi potestatem etiam nec ad hoc usus est quod licebat, sed, dum possit utere, licita abnuit seseque ut paruulum in medio eorum quibus praeerat ostendit."

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mindful that they are in essence no different from their subjects.[29] Here, again, Isidore takes his lead from Gregory the Great, who notes that masters as well as slaves should be admonished if "they do not recognise that those they hold in subjection because of their condition are their equals by reason of their community of nature." Gregory wishes such rebukes to make them "acknowledge themselves to be the fellow-servants [i.e. of God] of servants."[30] Isidore develops this point in a theological way. For him baptism was the equivalent of unction with chrism, and hence all Christians comprised a "priestly and royal people."[31] Thus, the commons, if faithful to the church, are the limbs of the body of Christ and should be treated accordingly.[32] This spiritual equality means that kings, as well as being respectful of their subjects and working for their general good, should equally be bound by the laws which they enforce on others.[33] Isidore's view rests again on biblical grounds. Here, it is Christ's dictum that "with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again."[34] The notion that the law should apply to all, including the legislators themselves, was in direct contrast to the formulation of classical Roman law, which held, to the contrary, that a ruler was not bound by the law.[35] Isidore's view of equality before the law was quoted directly by Gratian in his *Decretum* and thus passed to other medieval thinkers, such as John of Salisbury.[36] It anticipates *Magna Carta* by almost 600 years. Isidore is also insistent that the exercise of law be tempered with mercy. In his emphasis on mercy we can perhaps see the influence on Isidore's thinking of Ambrose, who held that the purpose of the state was to provide justice and happiness.[37] Mercy for Isidore entailed in particular that a ruler be

29 Isidore, *Sententiae* 3.49.3: "God gave power to princes to order their peoples and wished them preside over those with whom they share the same condition of being born and dying [...]" ("Dedit Deus principibus praesulatum pro regimine populorum, et illis eos praeesse uoluit cum quibus una est eis nascendi moriendique condition").

30 Gregory the Great, *Regula Pastoralis* 3.5.

31 Isidore, *De ecclesiasticis officiis* 2.26.

32 Isidore, *Sententiae* 3.49.3: "the faithful folk are the limbs of Christ" ("Membra quippe Christi fideles sunt populi"). This point is also made by Cassiodorus, *Expositio Psalmorum*, Psalms 20 and 118. See also N. Van Duesen, "Assembled in the Presence of God: Majestic Perseverance and the *Cantus Coronatus*," in *Mobs: An interdisciplinary Inquiry*, eds. N. Van Duesen and L.M. Koff (Leiden: 2012), 79–94.

33 Isidore, *Sententiae* 3.52.1.

34 Matt. 7:2.

35 "The ruler is not bound by the law," *Princeps legibus solutus est, Digest* (Ulpian) 1.3.3.31.

36 Gratian, *Decretum* 9.2, for John of Salisbury see Monahan, *Consent, Coercion*, 61–62.

37 Ambrose, *De Officiis* 1.22.129.

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concerned as much, if not more, with restitution for those who have been wronged as he is with punishment of the guilty.[38]

Most importantly of all for the future, Isidore insists that kingship resides not in a person, but in the qualities of that person. As such it can be lost, if those qualities are abandoned: "Kings are named from acting aright, and so the name of king is held by doing aright and by sinning it is lost."[39] In this he follows Cassiodorus, who is equally insistent that kingship is a gift from God and that true kings are those who are just and self-restrained.[40] Isidore's insistence on kingship being contingent on righteous behaviour is repeated verbatim in the most quoted and influential of Isidore's reflections on rulership which is found in book 9 of the *Etymologies*. Here, "king"/*rex* is defined as follows:

> Kings (*reges*) are so called from ruling (*regendo*). For just as a priest is so-called for sacrificing, so a king too is so-called from ruling. However, he who does not correct (*corrigit*) is no ruler (*regit*). Thus the name of king is held by doing aright and by sinning it is lost. Whence came the proverb of the ancients 'If you act aright, you will be king, if you do not, you will not.' The particular virtues of a king are two in number: justice and piety. However, piety is the more lauded in kings as justice by its very nature is severe.[41]

38 Isidore, *Sententiae* 3.50.3: "To return wrong for wrong is a just exchange, but he who adds clemency too justice does not return wrong for wrong to the guilty, but good for wrong to those who have suffered" ("Reddere malum pro malo uicissitudo iustitiae est, sed qui clementiam addit iustitiae, non malum pro malo culpatis reddit, sed bonum pro malo offensis impertit").

39 Isidore, *Sententiae* 3.48.7: "Reges a recte agendo uocati sunt, ideoque recte faciendo regis nomen tenetur, peccando amittitur."

40 Cassiodorus, *Expositio Psalmorum*, Ps. 137.4: "The kings of the earth are corporally masters through the gift of the Godhead. For that man who is shown to be a slave to sin is not properly designated a king. What he [David] calls *all* specifically signifies religious and moderate men for we see that many kings of the gentiles are enslaved by bestial sins or besmirched with wicked religious beliefs" ("Reges terrae sunt qui corporibus suis divinitatis munere dominanantur. Nam ile rex vere non dicitur, qui vitiis servire monstratur. Quod vero addidit omnes specialiter religiosos ac moderatos viros designat, quando multos reges gentium videmus aut vitiis feralibus subdi aut prava religione maculari").

41 "Recte igitur faciendo regis nomen tenetur, peccando amittitur. Vnde et apud veteres tale erat proverbium: 'Rex eris, si recte facias: si non facias, non eris.' Regiae virtutes praecipuae duae: iustitia et pietas. Plus autem in regibus laudatur pietas; nam iustitia per se severa est," Isidore, *Etymologiae* 9.3.4–5. As can be seen, Isidore strengthens his argument, and emphasises his message, by a substantial amount of word play.

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Here, we see a more concise, but identical, version of the *Sententiae*'s dogma. It is enhanced with an appeal to the classical past. Isidore's pithy proverb, *rex eris si recte facias, si non facias, non eris*, is an adaptation of a line of a Roman refrain itself old when adapted by the 1st-century B.C. poet Horace.[42] Isidore's slogan was to have powerful echoes in the political thought of the Middle Ages and beyond.

The importance of just rule to Isidore can be seen by the unforced appearance of this theme in sections of the *Etymologies* where entirely different matters are being discussed. In chapter 29 of the first book, we are told that the etymology of some words derives from their *causa*, or action,[43] and the example given is that of *reges* (kings), which we are told derives from *recte agendum*, "acting rightly."[44] Two chapters later, Isidore explains to the reader that a definition called a *differentia* is an implied difference in sense between two related words which separates their meaning. The example he chooses to use to illustrate his point is the *differentia* between a king and a tyrant: "When it is asked what difference there is between a king and a tyrant, the *differentia* is set forth that defines each of them: namely that is a king is unassuming and self-controlled, whereas a tyrant is impious and harsh."[45] The same contrast is used in the second book of the *Etymologies* to explain Isidore's seventh form of definition of words, again that of *differentia*, or in Greek κατα διαφοράν: "a king is unassuming and self-controlled, whereas a tyrant is cruel."[46]

For Isidore a king is to be judged by his actions rather than his words;[47] a consequence of this is that he is responsible for the behaviour of his underlings, and the appointment of bad judges is therefore a sin that rests at the door of the ruler.[48] For Isidore judicial corruption is a widespread and very serious

42 Horace, *Epistulae* 1.1.59–60: "At pueri ludentes: 'Rex eris' aiunt, 'si recte facies.'"

43 The alternative for derivations is *ex origine, ex nomine derivationum, ex nominibus locorum*, or being of barbarian derivation.

44 Isidore, *Etymologies* 1.29.3: "Etymologies of words are derived from either from their action such as 'kings' from acting rightly" ("Sunt autem Etymologiae nominum aut ex causa datae, ut 'reges' a recte agendo").

45 "ut cum quaeritur quid intersit inter regem et tyrannum, adiecta differentia, quid uterque sit definitur; id est, rex est modestus et temperans, tyrannus vero inpius et inmitis," Isidore, *Etymologiae* 1.31.1.

46 "rex modestus et temperatus, tyrannus vero crudelis," Isidore, *Etymologiae* 2.29.7.

47 Isidore, *Sententiae* 3.49.2: "He who rightly makes use of his power over his kingdom, establishes the substance of justice by his deeds rather than his words" ("Qui recte utitur regni potestatem, formam iustitiae factis magis quam uerbis instituit").

48 Isidore, *Sententiae* 3.52.1: "A crime to be held the responsibility of princes is the appointment, against the will of God, of wicked judges over the people" ("Ad delictum pertinet principum, qui prauos iudices contra uoluntatem Dei populis fidelibus praeferunt").

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matter—as much time is spent in the *Sententiae* on the need for judges to be just as there is on the obligations of kings. It is not a matter on which Isidore has much optimism:

> The people suffer more at the hands of wicked judges than the most bloodthirsty of foreign enemies. For no bandit is as avaricious towards foreigners as a wicked judge is towards his own. While brigands lie in wait in dark, out-of-the-way passes and set their snares there, these men openly rage in the rapacity of their greed. Foreign foes merely seek the blood of others, judges, like the cruellest butchers of their fellow citizens that can be imagined, exterminate the lives of their subjects by their oppression. Those who destroy are many, and rare are those who rule their people with the moderation of the law.[49]

Nor does the problem end with corrupt judges. Isidore also complains that

> the majority of those who are good judges have rapacious servants. They should be pictured, someone says, as Scylla is drawn and described: namely that she has a human form, but one girt and surrounded by dogs' heads. In like fashion, it happens that certain office-holders' humanity is thrown into confusion by the iniquity of their wicked associates.[50]

Echoing his wish for education in all parts of the social hierarchy,[51] Isidore believes that the ignorant along with the wicked should be excluded from the ranks of judges, as their ignorance means that they are unable to understand

49 "Grauius lacerantur pauperes a prauis iudicibus quam a cruentissimis hostibus. Nullus enim praedo tam cupidus in alienis quam iudex iniquus in suis. Latrones inaccessis faucibus ac latebrosis latentes insidias ponunt, isti palam rapacitatis auaritia saeuiunt. Hostes in aliorum sanguinem tantum intendunt; iudices, quasi crudelissimi carnifices ciuium, oppressione sua subiectorum uitam extingunt. Qui enim destruant multi sunt, rari sunt qui populos legum moderamine regant," Isidore, *Sententiae* 3.55.7.

50 "Plerumque et boni iudices sunt, sed ministros rapaces habent. Horum figura, ut ait quidam, tamquam Scilla pingitur atque describitur: ipsa quidem humana species, sed capitibus caninis accincta et circumdata. Non aliter quibusdam potestatibus accidit ut ipsorum humanitatem inmanitas iniquorum sociorum perturbed," Isidore, *Sententiae* 3.55.10. The reference is perhaps to Virgil, *Eclogues* 6.75, or Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 14. Roman authors often use Scylla as a metaphor for sexual rapacity, which may be an undercurrent in Isidore's comments here; for a discussion of this aspect of Scylla, see M. Govers Hopman, *Scylla: Myth, Metaphor, Paradox* (Cambridge: 2016), 230–53.

51 A constant care found in Isidore's writings is that the clergy be educated, see Isidore, *Sententiae* 3.35.

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the law.[52] Like the king, a good judge will be the servant of his people and, continuing another theme which runs throughout Isidore's works, will exercise his duties correctly, but temper them with mercy.[53]

5 The Church and Kingship

How, then, is a king, and indeed his subordinates, to be pious and just? For Isidore the answer is obvious: by being a good Christian in general and by being mindful in particular that he holds his position in trust from God, to Whom he will in the end have to render an account of his acts. This is all the more important because, again like Cassiodorus before him, Isidore concedes that there is no physical power able to coerce a king:

> If he becomes ensnared in vice, it is difficult for a king to change for the better. A sinning people fear their judge and are coerced from doing evil by the laws. However, kings, coerced only by their fear and terror of hell, rush freely and headlong there and fall through the abyss of license into every form of vice.[54]

It is here, therefore, that the church holds a crucial role in Isidore's thinking, as it provides a moral compass for the monarch. As Christians, secular rulers still

52 Isidore, *Sententiae* 3.55.1.

53 Isidore, *Sententiae* 3.52.2: "A good judge is ignorant of how to harm citizens and thus knows how to be of use to all" ("Bonus iudex sicut nocere ciuibus nescit, ita prodesse omnibus novit"); Isidore, *Sententiae* 3.52.4: "All who judge rightly bear a balance in their hand. In each scale he carries justice and mercy. The sentence for sin he will give through justice, but he tempers the punishment of sin through mercy so that through this balance let him with justice correct some sins, but pardon others with mercy" ("Omnis qui recte iudicat, stateram in manu gestat, in utroque penso iustitiam et misericordiam portat; sed per iustitiam reddet peccati sententiam, per misericordiam peccati temperat poenam, ut isto libramine quaedam per aequitatem corrigat, quaedam uero per miserationem indulgeat").

54 "Difficile est principem regredi ad melius, si uitiis fuerit inplicatus. Populi enim peccantes iudicem metuunt, et a malo suo legibus coercentur. Reges autem, nisi solo Dei timore metuque gehennae coerceantur, libere in praeceps proruunt, et per abruptum licentiae in omne facinus uitiorum labuntur," Isidore, *Sententiae* 3.51.1, cf. Cassiodorus, *Expositio Psalmorum,* Ps. 50.6: "For when the king does wrong he is brought before God alone because he has no man who can judge his deeds" ("Nam quando rex delinquit soli Deo reus est quia hominem non habet qui eius facta dijudicet").

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owe a duty of moral obedience to the Church[55] and will be held to account by God for the way they have behaved towards it and furthered, or failed to further, its ends.[56] Moreover, if a true king is one who was just and merciful, who is a better judge of which individuals conform to these criteria than the Church? Isidore strongly insists that the clergy (from whom he expects as much rectitude and humility as he does from kings and judges) have a duty to defend the poor. They are not to be reticent in criticising the wrongs of secular authorities when they encounter them, given that they are the only defence available to the victims. Isidore is appalled that "many" office-holders in the church are silenced through fear of losing favour or worse. His shock is shown by the verbatim use in the text of two biblical exempla, including God's direct command to Jeremiah: "Thou therefore gird up thy loins, and arise, and speak unto them all that I command thee: be not dismayed at their faces, lest I confound thee before them," from which he deduces that "thus it is shown that not to fear is a gift from God."[57] Perhaps even more startling is the use of the exclamation "the shame, the pain of it — *sed heu! pro dolor!*" when Isidore further laments that all too often this reticence betrays a worldly interest on the clergy's part, or even complicity in what has not been denounced.[58] On the other hand, if the poor are oppressed, good priests

> will bring aid to those being despoiled and not fearing troubles brought on by any enemy whatever [i.e. the king included], they will openly charge, denounce, and excommunicate the oppressors of the poor. They will have no fear of the attempts of their enemies to harm them, even if these succeed, *for the good shepherd lays down his life for his sheep*.[59]

55 Isidore, *Sententiae* 3.51.3: "Worldly powers are subject to the discipline of religion and although endowed with the rule of a kingdom, nevertheless are held fast by the bounds of the faith. Thus they should profess their faith in Christ in their laws and preserve their profession of that faith through their good behaviour" ("Sub religionis disciplinam saeculi potestates subiectae sunt; et quamuis culmine regni sint praediti, uinculo tamen fidei tenentur adstricti, ut fidem Christi suis legibus praedicent, et ipsam fidei praedicationem moribus bonis conseruent").

56 Isidore, *Sententiae* 3.53.3: "Let the princes of this world know that they must render an account to God for the Church with whose safeguarding they have been entrusted by Christ" ("Cognoscant principes saeculi Deo debere se rationem propter ecclesiam, quam a Christo tuendam suscipiunt").

57 Isa. 40:9; Jer. 1:17.

58 Isidore, *Sententiae* 3.45.2–3.

59 "Quando a potentibus pauperes opprimuntur, ad eripiendos eos boni sacerdotes protectionis auxilium ferunt, nec uerentur cuiusquam inimicitiarum molestias, sed oppressores

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Isidore may have found his inspiration for these arguments from Ambrose, who had argued passionately for freedom of speech for clerics in the face of secular disagreement.[60]

Given the strength of feeling expressed in the *Sententiae*, it is not surprising that this duty is also laid down specifically for bishops in the *acta* of the Fourth Council of Toledo, over which Isidore presided. Here it is also couched in strong language, but tactfully the king (who was also present at the Council) is assumed to be the last resort of the righteous and never a felon himself. Bishops are enjoined first to reprove the wrongdoers themselves, but if they remain obdurate, report them to the king so that "royal power may force from their wickedness those whom a bishop's warning did not move." Bishops failing this duty are to be tried for neglect at the following council.[61]

Isidore's vision for the Visigothic kingdom was thus one of a pious secular ruler working in harmony with a Church which would be fearless in its moral duty to its flock and ensure that the king was a just ruler, and thus a true king. This approach is similar to that of Pope Gelasius, whose letter to the Byzantine emperor Anastasius written in 494 also argues for two ruling authorities, one secular and one religious.[62] But while Gelasius argued for the superiority of the church on the grounds that it would give its judgement to God on the secular power, Isidore, as has been seen, believes that secular rulers will have to give that account directly to God. For him the moral superiority of the church is

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pauperum palam arguunt, increpant, excommunicant, minusque metuunt eorum nocendi insidias, etiamsi nocere ualeant: 'Pastor enim bonus animam suam ponit pro ouibus,'" Isidore, *Sententiae* 3.45.4; the quotation is John 10:11.

60 See especially Ambrose, *Epistula* 10.74. For a detailed discussion, see Melissa Marakauskas, *From Privilege to Proscription: The Transformation of Episcopal Conflict across the Long Fourth Century*, section 4.2.1 (PhD dissertation, University of Manchester, 2015).

61 "Bishops must not equivocate in the duty placed on them by God to protect and defend the people. Therefore, if they see that among the judges or powerful there are oppressors of the poor first they should confront them with a bishop's warning. But if they spurn correction, let them bring their insolence to the ears of the king that royal power may force from their wickedness those whom a bishop's warning did not move. If any bishop neglects this duty, he will be accused at the council" ("Episcopi in protegendis populis ac defendendis, inpositam a Deo sibi curam non ambigant. Ideoque dum conspiciunt iudices ac potentes pauperum obpressores existere, prius eos sacerdotali ammonitione redarguant. Et si contempserint emendari, eorum insolentiam regiis auribus intiment, ut quos sacerdotalis ammonitio non flectit ad iustitiam, regalis potestas ab [i] improbitate coerceat. ||fol. 75rb|| Si quis autem episcoporum id neglexerit concilio reus erit"), IV Toledo 32.

62 "There are two things by which this world is governed: the consecrated power of the pontiffs and royal power" ("Duo sunt quippe, imperator Auguste, quibus principaliter mundus hic regitur, auctoritas sacrata pontificum et regalis potestas"), PL 66, 633.

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deduced not from his views on the Final Judgement, but rather those on the Fall. There is no question in his thinking of a wish for a "theocratic" state directly ruled by bishops, but he does clearly insist that the Church's voice be listened to, and acted upon, by the secular powers. This is unsurprising, given that the enforcement of right religion and the suppression of sin was, after all, the only justification for the presence of kings at all: "What the priest cannot effect by his preaching of the faith, let that worldly power command though the fear of punishment."[63]

6 Biblical Foundations

Isidore's ideal state owes its theoretical foundations to the Deuteronomic approach to kingship in the Old Testament. This sees the need for the king to act justly, but it moves the locus of defining justice from the king to the religious. Both at the time of Deuteronomy's composition and in Isidore's own day, this was a radical approach.[64] In particular Isidore had departed from the classic formulation of the classical jurist Ulpian, who held that a ruler was not bound by the law and whatever pleased him carried the force of law.[65] In stark contrast to the Roman jurist's assertion that the ruler is above and, in fact, the source of law itself, Isidore insists that the teachings of the Bible provide external objective criteria which allow us to judge whether a ruler or his laws truly belong to these categories. He finds a biblical model for his vision of the ideal ruler in King David:

> He who rightly exercises kingly power, ought to excel all others so that the more he shines forth at the peak of honour, the more he will conduct himself with a humble heart, setting before himself as an example of

63 Isidore, *Sententiae* 3.53.1: "quod non praeualet sacerdos efficere per doctrinae sermonem, potestas hoc imperet per disciplinae terrorem."

64 See *Digest* (Ulpian) 1.4.1pr "*Quod principi placuit legis habet vigorem,*" "what pleases the emperor has the force of law" for the classical world. For the world of the Old Testament and ancient Near East, see G.E. Gerbrandt, *Kingship according to the Deuteronomistic history* (Atlanta: 1986), and especially B.M. Levinson, "The Reconceptualization of Kingship in Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomistic History's Transformation of Torah," *Vetus Testamentum* 51 (2001), 511–34.

65 *Quod principi placuit, legis habet vigorem*, "Whatever pleases the ruler has the force of law," *Digest* (Ulpian) 1.4.1. *Princeps legibus solutus est*, "the ruler is not bound by the law," *Digest* (Ulpian) 1.3.31. These are dogmatic, not pragmatic, statements.

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> humility, David who did not swell with pride because of his merits, but humbly abased himself, saying 'I walk as one contemptible and shall appear contemptible before the Lord who chose me.'[66]

The Bible presents David as precisely the secular auxiliary of the Church of the form that Isidore envisages his ideal monarch would be:

> I will appoint one shepherd over them to pasture them, My servant David; he shall pasture them and be their shepherd. I, the Lord, will be their God, and My servant David shall be prince among them … My servant David shall be prince over them, and there shall be one shepherd for them all; *they shall live by My statutes and carefully observe My decrees*.[67]

David owed his position, as had his predecessor, Saul, to the prophet Samuel, who had anointed him as God's chosen ruler.[68] He was a general of the first order and an effective secular ruler. He was also, a feature of which Isidore no doubt approved, merciful. David was anointed before the demise of Saul, an important point, as it showed how a ruler could cease to be a king through bad behaviour and its consequences. After God rejected Saul because he failed to obey His commands, he lost his sanity and his victories turned to defeat, resulting eventually in his own death and the extinction of his family at the hands of the Philistines.[69] In contrast, David's fidelity to God is rewarded with the extension of his line, which was ultimately to culminate in Christ Himself.[70] He is a flawed individual who sins, but he repents of those sins and shows himself willing to accept prophetic authority and chastisement by it.[71] Isidore's use of David gave the Israelite king a new lease of life as an exemplary monarch. He was to remain the ideal for kings throughout the Middle Ages, being praised by the Irish grammarian Sedullius Scotus in the 9th century for his faithfulness to

66 "Qui recte utitur regni potestatem, ita praestare se omnibus debet, ut quanto magis honoris celsitudine claret, tanto semetipsum mente humiliet, praeponens sibi exemplum humilitatis Dauid, qui de suis meritis non tumuit, sed humiliter sese deiciens dixit: Vilis incedam et uilis apparebo ante Deum qui elegit me." David's words are a paraphrase of 2 Sam. 6:22 referring to David's dancing before the Ark of the Covenant. Isidore has lifted them entirely out of their context to support his point.

67 Ezek. 34:23–24; 37:24.

68 1 Sam. 10, Saul; 1 Sam. 16:1–13, David.

69 1 Sam. 16, 1 Sam. 31.

70 See, *inter alia*, Mark 10:47, Rom. 1:3, Rev. 22:16.

71 See 2 Sam. 12:1–15; 2 Sam. 24:10; Ps. 51.

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God and equally lauded for the same reasons by the Spanish orientalist scholar Benito Arias Montano in the 16th century.[72]

It is unclear if, as part of his championing David, Isidore was thinking about the practice of royal unction in his own day.[73] This ritual would have been ideal for his vision of the state, as it would mean that any legitimate king would need to seek the approval of the church for his rule. The first attested unction of a Visigothic king, that of the King Wamba, as recorded in Julian of Toledo's *Historia Wambae Regis*, who was anointed at the royal villa of Gerticos in 672, postdates Isidore. Isidore does discuss unction in the *Etymologies*, but only in regard to its practice in ancient Israel.[74] Nevertheless, his reference is found in the midst of a discussion of the sacraments of the Church current in his own day, which has been seen as suggesting that the rite was in place when he wrote. Moreover, the Fourth Council of Toledo makes two explicit references to David as an anointed king when insisting on the necessity of loyalty to the king of the day, Sisenand (631–36). These proof texts make little sense if the king concerned had himself not been anointed. King believes that the ritual had been introduced shortly before the council in 631 to legitimate Sisenand, whose coup had pushed aside the previous king, Swintila (621–31).[75] This is by no means the only possibility. The practice could have begun during Hermenegild's abortive coup against his father, King Leovigild (579–84). This attempted usurpation took on a strong religious colouring when Hermenegild converted from Arianism to Trinitarianism. According to Gregory of Tours, at his conversion Hermenegild took the name John and was indeed anointed, presumably by Isidore's elder brother Leander, who was bishop of Seville at the time.[76] Once religion had been dragged into politics in this way, it would be quite

72 Sedulius Scottus, *De Rectoribus Christianis* 1, 13, ed. and trans. R.W. Dyson (Woodbridge: 2010); B. Arias Montano, *David, virtvtis exercitatissimae probatum Deo spectaculum: ex Dauidis pastoris, militis, ducis, exsulis ac prophetae exemplis* (Antwerp: 1575, repr. New Delhi: 2015).

73 See the discussion, with bibliography, in R. Barroso Cabrera and J. Morín de Pablos, "Imagen soberana y unción regia el reino visigodo de Toledo," *Codex Aquilarensis* 20 (2004), 6–65.

74 Isidore, *Etymologiae* 6.19.50: "For as remission of sins is granted in baptism, so sanctification of the spirit is attained by unction. This comes from the old practice in which those who attained to the priesthood and kingship were accustomed to be anointed hence Aaron was anointed by Moses" ("Nam sicut in baptismo peccatorum remissio datur, ita per unctionem sanctificatio spiritus adhibetur; et hoc de pristina disciplina, qua ungui in sacerdotium et in regnum solebant, ex quo et Aaron a Moyse unctus est").

75 P.D. King, *Law and Society in the Visigothic Kingdom* (Cambridge: 2006), 68, n. 146.

76 Gregory of Tours, *History of the Franks* 5.48: "he was converted to the Catholic faith, and on his unction took the name John" ("conversus est ad legem catholicam ac, dum crismaretur, Iohannis est vocitatus").

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plausible that the practice was adopted by Leovigild's younger son, Reccared, when he converted to Trinitarian Christianity on his accession to the throne in 589.[77] Nor can it be ruled out that a similar, but Arian, ceremony had been held still earlier for Leovigild himself. Leovigild was in many ways the founder of the unitary Visigothic kingdom, and we are told by Isidore that he was the first to surround himself with the ceremonial trappings of royalty.[78] There is no mention of unction, but perhaps, as a Hispanic patriot, Isidore would wish to pass over such blasphemy. Leovigild occupies an ambiguous position in Visigothic historiography. Later writers condemned his Arianism but took quiet pride in his consolidation of the kingdom. This problem may well explain Isidore's reticence here.

It appears likely therefore that by Isidore's day at least one king had received unction at the hands of the church. It is possible that if Sisenand was the first Visigothic king to be anointed that this innovation was introduced by Isidore himself. If so, he would have been disappointed by its results. The history of Visgothic Spain shows that unction provided very little in the way of ecclesiastical control over monarchs or influence on nobles to respect the divinely sanctioned authority of the king. For unfortunately, while the ritual could only happen at the hands of the Church, the control over the monarchy that it placed in those hands was lost in the very process of anointing the king. An anointed king possessed at least as close, and arguably a closer, relationship with God than any churchman, something ambitious monarchs were not slow to exploit when it was convenient to do so.[79] Isidore's friend King Sisebut (612–21) had been happy to intervene in church affairs, and indeed lecture the religious on them. Later monarchs too, such as Chindaswinth, had no qualms in asserting their authority over the church and doing so in theological terms.

7 The Problem of Tyranny

Nevertheless, Isidore's philosophy of the state and his view that only a just ruler could be truly called a king could be seen to raise the threat of a legitimate

77 The view of C. Sánchez Albornoz, "La *ordinatio principis* en la España goda y postvisigoda," *Cuadernos de Historia de España* 35–36 (1962), 5–36. esp. 14–16, and of Barroso Cabrera and Morín de Pablos, "Imagen soberana," 33–36.

78 Isidore, *Historia Gothorum* 51: "he was the first to sit on a throne among his people covered in a royal robe" ("Primusque etiam inter suos regali veste opertus in solio resedit").

79 See A.T. Fear, "God and Caesar: The Dynamics of Visigothic Monarchy," in *Every Inch a King: Comparative Studies on Kings and Kingship in the Ancient and Medieval Worlds*, eds. L. Mitchell and C. Melville (Boston: 2013), 285–302.

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uprising against a monarch judged to be the result of ruling badly, and his words were used for just that purpose. For example, in 1073 Otto of Nordheim used the doctrine of right rulership to justify his rebellion against Henry IV of Germany. The contemporary historian Bruno of Magdeburg directly attributes this doctrine to Isidore in his *Saxonicum Bellum*, so we see Isidore's philosophy seemingly operating in both the realms of theory and practice. Equally, Manegold of Lautenbach in his *Ad Gebehardum Liber* of *c*.1085 also deploys Isidore's argument from *ius naturale* that "king" is not the name of a nature, but of an office, to assert that Henry IV had sinned to the degree that he should be deposed.[80] Isidore's dictum, albeit in a garbled form, was also used in 1649 at the trial of King Charles I. One of his accusers, Judge John Bradshaw, after likening Charles to Caligula and Nero, concluded:

> Truly, sir, We have been told, *Rex est dum bene regit, Tyrannus qui populum opprimit*. And if so be that be the definition of a Tyrant, then see how you come short of it in your actions, whether the highest Tyrant, by that way of arbitrary government, and that you have sought to put, you were putting upon the people? Whether that was not as high an act of Tyranny as any of your predecessors were guilty of, nay many degrees beyond it?[81]

The notion that rulers could, and indeed, ought to be deposed if they fell short of certain standards has only gained in popularity since the 17th century, and Isidore's definition of rulership has provided powerful ammunition for its theoretical grounding. Isidore himself, however, would have been horrified that his work could be used in this way. Rather he was in agreement with Gregory the Great that, however wicked, each ruler had been set up by God and it was thus right to obey, not rebel against, him.[82] Tyrants could be identified, but they were to be endured, not deposed. A variety of reasons can be found for Isidore's advocacy of passive endurance of bad rulers. One is his own experience. Isidore had lived through a foreign invasion brought on by a civil war, lived through a further long civil war waged around Seville from 579–84, and witnessed the near outbreak of another after the accession of King Reccard in 589. Later in life he saw two further coups. All of this is likely to have convinced him that stability, even in an unjust form, was preferable to anarchy.

80 See J. Rider, *God's Scribe: The Historiographical Art of Galbert of Bruges* (Washington, DC: 2001), 153–55.

81 Thomas B. Howell, ed., *A Complete Collection of State Trials and Proceedings for High Treason and Other Crimes and Misdemeanors from the Earliest Period to the Year 1783: With Notes and Other Illustrations* (London: 1816), vol. 4, col. 1114.

82 Gregory the Great, *Regula Pastoralis* 3.4.

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Theologically, too, Isidore was happy to accept the notion that tyrants are a *flagellum Dei*:

> Kings when they are good are a gift from God, but when they are bad, they are a product of a people's sin. For a people's worth determines the nature of their rulers as Job testified: He makes a hypocrite king because of the sins of the people. When God is angry the people receive such a ruler as their sins deserve.[83]

Isidore is even prepared to reverse his concern that bad kings corrupt their subjects to argue that "at times kings are even changed by the wickedness of their people and those who appeared good before they ruled become iniquitous when they receive their realm."[84] Even in this punishment Isidore, like Augustine before him,[85] divines God's mercy: "Humble servitude is better than arrogant freedom. For many are to be found who are set under sinful masters and freely serving God, men who though subject to their masters in the body are uplifted in their minds."[86] The good man knows that suffering in this world will lead to joy in the next.[87]

All of the threads of Isidore's political thought can be found coalescing in canon 75 of the Fourth Council of Toledo, over which he presided in 633.[88] The council was held some three years after the collapse of Swintila's reign and his

83 Isidore, *Sententiae* 3.48.11: "Reges quando boni sunt, muneris esse Dei; quando uero mali, sceleris esse populi. Secundum meritum enim plebium disponitur uita rectorum, testante Iob: Qui regnare facit hypocritam propter peccata populi. Irascente enim Deo, talem rectorem populi suscipiunt, qualem pro peccato merentur."

84 Isidore, *Sententiae* 3.48.11: "Non numquam pro malitia plebis etiam reges mutantur, et qui ante uidebantur esse boni, accepto regno fiunt iniqui."

85 Cf. Augustine, *De civitate Dei* 1.8.

86 Isidore, *Sententiae* 3.47.3: "Melius est subiecta seruitus quam elata libertas. Multi enim inueniuntur Deo libere seruientes sub dominis constituti flagitiosis; qui, etsi subiecti sunt illis corpore, praelati tamen sunt mente."

87 Isidore, *Sententiae* 3.1.2: "God's mercy is so disposed that it may first here correct a man's sins by blows and afterwards free him from eternal punishment. For the elect of God is polished by the woes of this life that being made more perfect he might enjoy the life to come" ("Ordinata est miseratio Dei quae prius hic hominem per flagella a peccatis emendat, et postea ab aeterno supplicio liberat. Electus enim Dei doloribus uitae huius adteritur, ut perfectior uitae futurae lucretur"); Isidore, *Sententiae* 3.1.4: "Justly the blows of this world lead on to eternal joy and so the just man ought to rejoice in his punishment and the impious ought to be afraid in his prosperity" ("Iusto temporalia flagella ad aeterna proficiunt gaudia; ideoque et iustus in poenis gaudere debet, et impius in prosperitatibus timere debet").

88 Text and Spanish translation in Vives, *Concilios Visigoticos e Hispano-Romanos*, 217–22.

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replacement by Sisenand. Sisenand's supporters had been prepared to bribe the Frankish king Dagobert (629–34) to support their putsch—a highly risky matter given the strong dislike of the Franks in Spain[89]—and his coup seemingly provoked an attempt at secession in Andalusia and Extremadura led by one Iudila.[90] Swintila is a nebulous figure. He had himself displaced King Sisebut's young son Reccared II as king in 621 in dubious circumstances. He was nevertheless an effective monarch who ended the Byzantine occupation of parts of the Iberian Peninsula. Isidore praises him effusively during his reign,[91] but, given that he had been a good friend of King Sisebut, in reality he may have been no true ally of the usurper. After his fall Swintila was roundly denounced at the Fourth Council of Toledo in 633. This may simply have been the rhetoric of the day, done for the benefit of Sisenand, the new king, but could also suggest that Swintila had not been a friend of the church, still less compliant to its wishes. If this is the case, his reign may well have provoked Isidore to think hard about the relationship between church and state and perhaps stimulated his thoughts as expressed in the *Sententiae*, which he most likely wrote in 633 shortly after the Council.[92]

Canon 75 insists that Swintila, in horror at his crimes, had voluntarily surrendered the throne.[93] Regardless of the truth of the matter, the statement happily conforms with Isidore's doctrine that rulers are not to be overthrown by force. The need for loyalty to the king forms the first part of the canon. Its appeal is based not only on secular pragmatism—such solidarity will ensure the well-being of the nation—but also on religious sanction. Disloyalty and rebellion, it is argued, are sacrilege, as the oath of loyalty to the king was taken in God's name.[94] Rebels are directly likened to Judas and should suffer the worst of all possible religious penalties: anathema and excommunication. Two biblical exempla referring to the inviolate status of the Lord's anointed are

89 Fredegar, *Chronicon* 4.73.

90 For a general discussion of the demise of Swintila see Luis A. García Moreno, "La oposición a Suintila: Iglesia, Monarquía y Nobleza en el Reino Visigodo," *Polis* 3 (1991), 13–24.

91 Isidore, *Historia Gothorum* 62, 65.

92 For this date, see Pierre Cazier, ed., *Isidorus Hispalensis. Sententiae*, CSSL 111 (Turnhout: 1998), xiv-xix.

93 "who in fear of his crimes deprived himself of the kingdom and set aside the trappings of power" ("qui scelera propria metuens seipsum regno privavit, et potestatis fascibus exuit").

94 "Thus it is sacrilege if the pledged loyalty to their king is broke by a people for not only is there a breach of a pledge in them but also against God in Whose name that promise was made" ("Sacrilegium quippe est si violetur a gentibus regum suorum promissa fides, quia non solum in eis fit pacti transgressio, sed et in Deum quidem in cuius nomine pollicetur ipsa promissio").

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adduced to strengthen the bishops' case, and a further one warns of the dangers of Divine wrath that will attend any such behaviour.[95] Looking to the future, the canon goes on to envisage a major role for the church as a kingmaker, stating that, on the death of the incumbent monarch, the "leaders of the people and their priests shall choose by joint counsel a successor to the kingdom."[96] The canon then outlines a vision of kingship which coincides perfectly with Isidore's writings on the subject:

> With due humility we ask you, our present King and those future kings of the ages to come, showing yourselves moderate and gentle towards your subjects, to rule with justice and piety over those people entrusted to you by God and to respond with reciprocal goodness to him, Christ the Giver, who has entrusted us to you, ruling in humility of heart and with earnest intent to act aright. Nor let any of you give sentence alone in capital or civil cases, but let the guilt of malefactors be made plain in open judgement through the consent of the people with their rulers. Rule gently with your people unmolested so that you may rule over them as much by mercy as severity. And while all such things are so preserved by the aid of God and your own pious moderation, let kings rejoice in their people and the people in their kings and God in both of them. But we make this declaration about future kings: if one of them, contrary to respect for the law, exercises his power cruelly over the people in an arrogant reign and right royal disdain amid outrages, crimes, and greed, let him be condemned as anathema by Christ the Lord, let him be separated from, and judged by, God for his presumption to work ill deeds and bring the kingdom to ruin.[97]

95 Ps. 104 (105) 15: "Touch not mine anointed" ("Nolite tangere christos meos"); 1 Sam. 26:9: "who can stretch forth his hand against the Lord's anointed, and be guiltless?" ("Quis extendit manum suam in Christum domini et innocens erit?"); Isa. 34:5: "For my sword shall be bathed in heaven" ("Inebriatus est gladius meus in caelo"); the verse continues, "behold, it shall come down upon Idumea, and upon the people of my curse, to judgment." It is this threat that the council wished to emphasise.

96 "Sed defuncto in pace principe, primatus gentis cum sacerdotibus successorem regni consilio communi constituant."

97 "Te quoque presentem regem et futuros aetatum sequentium principes humilitate debita deposcimus. Ut moderati et mites erga subiectos existentes cum iustitia et pietate populos a deo vobis creditos regatis bonamque vicissitudinem qui vos nobis constituit largitori Christo respondeatis, regnantes in humilitate cordis, cum studio bonae actionis. Nec quisquam vestrum solus in casum capitum aut rerum sententiam ferat, sed consensu publico cum rectoribus ex iudicio manifesto delinquentium culpa patescat, servata a vobis in offensis mansuetudine, ut non severitate magis in illis quam indulgentia polleatis.

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As can be seen, all of Isidore's concerns about kingship are condensed in this canon. We see his insistence that rulers of whatever kind hold their power through divine dispensation and thus must not be overthrown. The threat of anathematisation of a wicked ruler significantly comes not from the Church on earth, but rather Christ in heaven, and it is in heaven too, not on earth, where such a monarch will be called to account. However, alongside this, we can see Isidore's concomitant belief that kings are but stewards of God, not rulers by virtue of their own person, and from this it follows that their rule should be just and open and, seemingly a particular concern of Isidore's, tempered with mercy. Moreover, there is also, in the formulation of how a king is to be elected, a wish that any monarch should command the broad consensus of the community as a whole. Still, rather than positing a "social contract" between ruler and ruled, we should see Isidore's state as one which has at its heart a "divine contract" made between God and the ruler. God has given the ruler a mandate and in return expects his steward to rule well over the people he has entrusted to him. While such a rule will require firmness at times, it must necessarily be conducted in a manner which furthers the common good, not the ruler's own benefit. The Church's role in such a state is to provide guidance and warnings to the ruler to ensure that he fulfils his part of the divine contract correctly.

8 Conclusion

Isidore's legacy in later political thought is often forgotten, but his writings formed the basis for the ideas expressed in the "Mirrors of Princes" throughout the Middle Ages and preserved many traditions that are now taken for granted. These include the notions that law and government should be open and for the benefit of all, that rulers should be selected through the broad consensus of their community, that they can be judged by criteria other than those of their own devising, that they should be answerable to the law, and that they are responsible for the acts of their appointees. Isidore is more than aware of the problem of the tyrant, and his writing eloquently poses Hamlet's question of

Ut dum omnia haec auctore deo pio a vobis moderamine conservantur, et reges in populis, et populi in regibus, et deus in utrisque laetetur. Sane de futuris regibus hanc sententiam promulgamus: Ut si quis ex eis contra reverentiam legum superba dominatione et fastigio in flagitiis et facinore sive cupiditate crudelissimam potestatem in populis exercuerit, anathematis sententia[m] a Christo domino condempnetur, et habeat a[n] deo separationem atque iudicium, propter quod presumpserit prava agere, et in pernitiem regnum convertere."

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what is nobler in the mind. It shows both of the Prince of Denmark's solutions have their strengths. While Isidore's own religious beliefs and political experiences led him to believe that the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune should be endured, his writings also helped lay the intellectual foundations for the arguments of those who wished to end them. It would be wrong to present Isidore as a profound political thinker—though he is not, as is sometimes asserted, simply a slavish follower of the sources he had read.[98] His most important contribution to political thought is to have kept alive the tradition of natural law which may well have died without its popularisation through his works, and thus helped create a climate where the rulers of society could be held to account for their deeds. It is a legacy for which we should be duly thankful.

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98 For Isidore as an original thinker see the chapters in *Isidore of Seville and his Reception in the Early Middle Ages: Transmitting and Transforming Knowledge*, eds. Andrew Fear and Jamie Wood (Amsterdam: 2016).

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CHAPTER 13

Confronting the Other: Isidore of Seville on Pagans, Romans, Barbarians, Heretics, and Jews

Raúl González Salinero

1 Introduction[1]

The Visigothic conversion to Catholicism, solemnly established at the Third Council of Toledo in 589, brought about a true *societas fidelium Christi*,[2] "a unitary body bound together by a common faith and ruled over by a divinely sanctioned head."[3] Similar to the Edict of Thessalonica (*Cunctos populos*) (380), after which the identity of the Roman was equated with that of the faithful Christian, in the "new" Visigothic state, ruled by a Catholic monarch submitted to the doctrines of the Catholic Church, all subjects would be defined by the status of *fidelis*.[4] Indeed, according to Isidore of Seville, "God has granted sovereignty to princes to rule over peoples,"[5] a *donum* which should be used to protect only "members of Christ," in other words, the *fideles*:

1 The following abbreviations to works of Isidore are used in the main text (full references are provided in the bibliography): *Alleg.*: *Allegoriae*; *Chron.*: *Chronica*; *De fide*: *De fide catholica ex veteri et novo testamento contra Iudaeos*; *De vir. ill.*: *De viris illustribus*; *Etym.*: *Etymologiae*; *Hist. Goth.*: *Historia Gothorum*; *Quaest.*: *Quaestiones in Vetus Testamentum*; *Reg. mon.*: *Regula monachorum*; *Sent.*: *Sententiae*; *Synon.*: *Synonyma*.

2 *Leges Visigothorum* 12.2.15.

3 P.D. King, *Law and Society in the Visigothic Kingdom* (Cambridge: 1972), 132. See also Rachel L. Stocking, *Bishops, Councils, and Consensus in the Visigothic Kingdom, 589–633* (Ann Arbor: 2000), 59–88; María del Rosario Valverde Castro, *Ideología, simbolismo y ejercicio del poder real en la monarquía visigoda: un proceso de cambio* (Salamanca: 2000), 195–215; Céline Martin, *La géographie du pouvoir dans l'Espagne visigothique* (Lille: 2003), 331–32.

4 See Jeremy du Quesnay Adams, "Ideology and Requirements of 'Citizenship' in Visigothic Spain: The Case of the *Judaei*," *Societas. A Review of Social History* 2 (1972), 317–32; Wolf Liebeschuetz, "Citizen Status and Law in the Roman Empire and the Visigothic Kingdom," in *Strategies of Distinction. The Construction of Ethnic Communities, 300–800*, eds. Walter Pohl and Helmut Reimitz (Leiden: 1998), 148–52.

5 "Dedit Deus principibus praesulatum pro regimine populorum […]," Isidore, *Sententiae* 3.49.3.

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> It is clear that believing peoples are the limbs of Christ so that as long as they who have received this power rule well by it, they give a good return to God, who granted it to them.[6]

The bishops present at the Fourth Council of Toledo in 633 were under Isidore's direct influence and leadership, and they defended in the second canon the principle of the unity of the kingdom through one faith: one *fides*, one *regnum* (*nec diuersa sit ultra in nobis ecclesiastica consuetudo, qui una fide continemur et regno*). Therefore, *infidelitas* to God and *infidelitas* to the king, who kept a watch over the Church of God, were one and the same.[7]

The political theory that established the religious legitimacy of the Visigothic monarchy and identified the interests of the king, as guide and intercessor of his people before God, with the Church's doctrinal principles, quickly found its most elaborate expression in Isidore's writings.

Jacques Fontaine asserts that Isidore worked very hard to outline "un proyecto global de sociedad" ("a global social project") in which he tried to harmonize all the different components of the Visigothic kingdom. He established a direct correlation between the Gothic subject, the continuity of the patriotic Roman tradition, and the sacred character of a monarchy that ruled according to the doctrinal values of the Church: *Patria Gothorum*, *romanitas*, *rex rectus* and *ciuitas Dei peregrinans*.[8] The correlation between the Visigoths' cultural roots and Roman tradition was largely the result of the kingdom's affinity with the Catholic faith.[9] Isidore established a theology of power which assigned to the king the task of protecting the Church and forming a *regnum Christi*. This conception of rule did not derive from purely political speculation but out of the doctrinal struggle against all those outside the establishment.

6 "Membra quippe Christi fideles sunt populi, quos dum ea potestate, quam accipiunt, optime regunt, bonam utique uicissitudinem Deo largitori restituunt," Isidore, *Sententiae* 3.49.3.

7 This reality was evident in the Visigothic legal system: see Carlos Petit, *Iustitia gothica. Historia social y teología del proceso en la Lex Visigothorum* (Huelva: 2000), 113.

8 Jacques Fontaine, "Isidoro de Sevilla, padre de la cultura europea," in *La conversión de Roma. Cristianismo y paganismo*, eds. José María Candau, Fernando Gascó, and Antonio Ramírez de Verger (Madrid: 1990), 272. On the interrelation of these elements, see Marc Reydellet, "Les intentions idéologiques et politiques dans la Chronique d'Isidore de Séville," *Mélanges d'Archéologie et d'Histoire de l'École Française de Rome* 82 (1970), 397, and Eleonora dell'Elicine, *En el principio fue el Verbo. Políticas del siglo y estrategias del poder eclesiástico en el reino visigodo de Toledo* (*589–711*) (Cádiz: 2013), 168–69. On Isidore's concept of *fides catholica*, see Wolfram Drews, *Juden und Judentum bei Isidor von Sevilla. Studien zum Traktat De fide catholica contra Iudaeos* (Berlin: 2001), 250–62.

9 Bruno Luiselli, *Storia culturale dei rapporti tra mondo romano e mondo germanico* (Rome: 1992), 585–86.

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Even if they could eventually be submitted to the same political authority, the one element that unified the individuals that embodied "the other" was their *infidelitas*. Pagans, heretics, and Jews were all viewed as stemming from the same source of evil, originating from the devil.[10] They posed a constant threat to the true faith, and therefore to the *regnum Christi* (*Sent*. 1.16).[11] None of these "errors" could be justified for Isidore:

> Those who turn from idolatry to Judaism or to heresy, turn, as the prophet says, from one evil to another and are not known to God as they cross over from the error of paganism to another error.[12]

Even though paganism and heresy preoccupied Isidore and the rest of the bishops of the Visigothic kingdom, after the conversion to Catholicism and the implementation of various measures that reduced the threat of heresy considerably (especially Arianism), the notion of the "perfidious" Jew slowly replaced pagans and heretics as "the other," embodying all of the elements that characterized the enemies of the *regnum Christi*.[13] One can clearly perceive this process in the different versions of Isidore's writings in the growing intensity with which he deploys the concept of the "other" sometimes viewed figuratively and on other occasions as a real threat.

2 Pagans

2.1 *Theoretical Discourse: Antiquarian Prevention*

Taking into account a considerable portion of the anti-pagan arguments found within the Patristic tradition, Isidore approached the problem of pagan religion from a perspective that is both encyclopedic and timeless. Indeed, with the exception of a few ambiguous, anachronistic references, his perspective

10 Emilio Mitre, "Vicisitudes políticas y cultura antiherética ante la atomización del mundo mediterráneo," in *Ortodoxia y herejía entre la Antigüedad y el Medievo* (Madrid: 2003), 100.

11 Federico Mario Beltrán Torreira, "La herejía y sus imágenes en las obras exegéticas y pedagógicas de san Isidoro de Sevilla," *Anuario de Estudios Medievales* 17 (1987), 28.

12 "Qui ab idololatria ad Iudaismum uel haeresim transeunt, iuxta prophetam, de malo ad malum egressi sunt, et Dominum non cognouerunt, quia de infidelitatis errore in errorem alium transierunt," Isidore, *Sententiae* 1.16.15.

13 Catherine Cordero Navarro, "El problema judío como visión del 'otro' en el reino visigodo de Toledo. Revisiones historiográficas," *En la España Medieval* 23 (2000), 11–12.

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was very far from the contemporary realities of his day.[14] The concept of *superstitio* acquired, as it did for all other Christian writers, a pejorative meaning as it related to the pernicious world of empty practices brought about by a false religion.[15] However, the definition of *superstitio* as "a superfluous or superimposed observance" and "senile with age" in the *Etymologiae* (8.3.6), suggests that Isidore wanted to convey the idea that *superstitio* applied more to practices alien to accepted Christian doctrine than to paganism itself.[16] Thus, it is not surprising to discover in his *Sententiae* a close relationship between pagans and heretics, who were both apparently incited by the devil (*Sent.* 1.16.14; *Quaest. In Iob* 8.2–3). This assumes that, in opposition to Christianity, idolatry originating in primitive religions and belonged to beliefs subject to barbarism. The word "pagan" thus came to denote, in general terms, all that belonged to the realm of superstition and unchristian ways.[17]

In the only surviving canon of the Third Council of Seville, celebrated under Isidore's rule between the years 619 and 624, preserved in the *Juliana* recension of the *Hispana* (and, with a few textual variations, among the Pseudoisidorian Decretals), it is specified that Jewish children who, through a fraudulent simulation, had escaped forced baptism,[18] remained "pagan" (*sicque occulta ac nefaria simulatione natos suos paganos retienent*). In other words, they lacked the grace of baptism and for this reason remained outside the Church, and consequently the individual, whether Jew or pagan, was immersed in barbarism and superstition.[19]

14 Pablo C. Díaz and Juana M. Torres, "Pervivencias paganas en el cristianismo hispano (siglos IV–VII)," in *El cristianismo. Aspectos históricos de su origen y difusión en Hispania*, eds. Juan Santos and Ramón Teja (Vitoria-Gasteiz: 2000), 253.

15 Rosa María Herrera, "Concepto de religión y superstición en las *Etimologías* de san Isidoro de Sevilla," *Helmantica* 44 (1993), 532–33; Sergey Vorontsov, "Some Considerations on the Concept of Religion in the *Etymologiae* of Isidore of Seville," *Athenaeum* 104 (2016), 245–50.

16 Céline Martin, "*De sacrilegiis extirpendis*. Interpretar la legislación contra el paganismo en la *Hispania* de los siglos VI–VII," in *La Iglesia como sistema de dominación en la Antigüedad tardía*, eds. José Fernández Ubiña, Alberto J. Quiroga Puertas, and Purificación Ubric Rabaneda (Granada: 2015), 279.

17 John Henderson, *The Medieval World of Isidore of Seville. Truth from Words* (Cambridge: 2007), 118.

18 Raúl González Salinero, "Isidoro y los judíos en el único canon conservado del desaparecido Concilio III de Sevilla," in *Guerra y rebelión en la Antigüedad tardía. El siglo VII en España y su contexto mediterráneo*, eds. Luis A. García Moreno and Sebastián Rascón Marqués (Alcalá de Henares: 2005), 201–11, reprinted in Raúl González Salinero, *Judíos y cristianos durante la Antigüedad tardía: entre la convivencia y la controversia* (Barcelona: 2006), 227–36.

19 See Wolfram Drews, "Jews as Pagans? Polemical Definitions of Identity in Visigothic Spain," *Early Medieval Europe* 11 (2002), 189–207.

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Isidore's interest in the origin and nature of the pagan gods originated both in his intellectual curiosity and his eagerness to register, within an encyclopedic context, the human character of some gods adored by virtue of the devil's instigation.[20] Isidore delved deeply in pagan literature, which he advised the majority of Christians not to read (*Etym.* 8.7; *Sent.* 3.13).[21] Now, mindful of the fact that ignorance is the mother of all evils and one of the nursing mothers of vice (*Synon.* 2.65),[22] Isidore was often prone to letting monks and priests read, with extreme caution, pagan authors.[23] In other instances, as in his monastic practices, Isidore asserts the opposite: "monks should not read books by pagan authors, for it is preferable to ignore their doctrines than to fall in the joke of their errors by own accord" (*Reg. mon.* 8).[24] Drawing inspiration from Augustine's *Confessions*, Isidore recognizes the accomplishments of classical philosophy[25] and pagan philosophers' cosmic knowledge, while he simultaneously reproaches them for their ingratitude to God, which was the result of the devil's influence[26]:

> The pagan philosophers as they did not seek God as they ought to have, fell into the hands of the rebel angels and the Devil set himself up as their mediator for Death, just as Christ has set himself up as our mediator for Life.[27]

According to Isidore, paganism was intimately connected with the practices of magic and divination, which could lead to the survival of demonic forces. In his *Etymologies* we find that pagan philosophers and poets are in the same

20 Isidore, *Etymologiae* 8.11. See Jacques Fontaine, *Isidore de Séville et la culture classique dans l'Espagne wisigothique* (Paris: 1959), 809; Katherine Nell Macfarlane, "Isidore of Seville on the Pagan Gods (*Origines* VIII.11)," *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society*, n.s. 70 (1980), 1–40; Díaz and Torres, "Pervivencias paganas," 253; Martin, "*De sacrilegiis extirpendis*," 279.

21 Luca Montecchio, *I visigoti e la rinascita culturale del secolo VII* (Perugia: 2006), 80–81.

22 In the preface to his *De natura rerum* Isidore gives the following view of the natural sciences: "it is neither a mark of futility nor of superstition to learn the nature of things, as long it is done through healthy and careful precepts."

23 Stephen McKenna, *Paganism and Pagan Survivals in Spain up to the Fall of the Visigothic Kingdom* (Washington, DC: 1938), 137.

24 See McKenna, *Paganism and Pagan Survivals*, 136; Díaz and Torres, "Pervivencias paganas," 254; Montecchio, *I visigoti e la rinascita culturale*, 80–81.

25 Francisco Javier Lozano Sebastián, *San Isidoro y la filosofía clásica* (León: 1982).

26 Jacques Fontaine, *Isidoro de Sevilla. Génesis y originalidad de la cultura hispánica en tiempos de los visigodos* (Madrid: 2002), 182.

27 "Philosophi gentium non, sicut oportet, Deum quaerentes, in angelos inciderunt praeuaricatores; factus que est illis mediator diabolus ad mortem, sicut nobis Christus ad uitam," Isidore, *Sententiae* 1.17.1.

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category as prophetesses and magicians (*Etym*. 8.8–9). Their occultism and evil spells constantly preoccupied Isidore, who accordingly (*Etym*. 8.9.3)[28] advised Christians to be very vigilant:

> In all these the craft of demons has issued from a certain pestilential alliance of humans and evil angels. Hence all these things are to be avoided by a Christian, and entirely repudiated and condemned with every curse.[29]

2.2 *Praxis: The Dying Embers*

There are relatively few references to "popular religion" in Visigothic sources of the 7th century,[30] with the exception of a few which served, as in the case of the writings of Isidore of Seville, to expose an archaic image of ancestral practices which, from a moral standpoint, should be rejected outright.[31] Besides, not all religious and social traditions outside the norms of the Church should automatically be considered pagan, nor do the behaviours our sources describe as "superstitious" necessarily deserve the label of "pagan," as conferred on them by the Church authorities.[32] However, certain canons reveal the constant concern that some superstitious practices or remnants of paganism would surface in the ecclesiastical hierarchy of the Visigothic Church, over which Isidore exercised considerable authority.

The bishops gathered at the Third Council of Toledo (589) had already realized that the sacrilege of idolatry (*idolatriae sacrilegium*) was widely spread throughout Gaul and Hispania; it urged, in collaboration with local judges (*iudices territoriorum*), its investigation in all the dioceses so that, once detected, it could be properly punished (canon 16).[33] In one of the first Councils led by Isidore of Seville (the aforementioned Third Council of Seville), Bishop Martianus of Astigi (Ecija) was dismissed on the grounds of a false accusation, including a visit to a fortune-teller, Simplicia, who was asked to provide an

28 Díaz and Torres, "Pervivencias paganas," 254.

29 "In quibus omnibus ars daemonum est ex quadam pestifera societate hominum et angelorum malorum exorta. Vnde cuncta uitanda sunt a Christiano, et omni penitus execratione repudianda atque damnanda," Isidore, *Etymologiae* 8.9.31, trans. Stephen A. Barney, W.J. Lewis, J.A. Beach, and Oliver Berghof, *The Etymologies of Isidore of Seville* (Cambridge: 2006), 183.

30 On this topic, see J.N. Hillgarth, "Popular Religion in Visigothic Spain," in *Visigothic Spain: New Approaches*, ed. Edward James (Oxford: 1980), 3–60.

31 Díaz and Torres, "Pervivencias paganas," 243.

32 Yitzhak Hen, "Religious Culture and the Power of Tradition in the Early Medieval West," in *A Companion to Medieval World*, eds. Carol Lansing and Edward D. English (Oxford: 2009), 73–74.

33 Díaz and Torres, "Pervivencias paganas," 243.

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omen on his own life and that of the king.[34] Although the minutes of the Third Council of Seville are not available in their entirety (only the above-mentioned canon), the case is known because of an exculpatory verdict which was made years later at the Sixth Council of Toledo (638) after the witnesses had withdrawn their testimony relating to the specific content of the consultation with the fortune-teller and not to the act of requesting her services. All this implied an implicit recognition on the part of the bishops in the fortune-teller's ability.[35] In the final stages of Isidore's episcopacy, the Fourth Council of Toledo (633) notes that bishops, priests, and deacons often visited "warlocks, diviners, prophets, or the sort of soothesayers who cast lots or others who profess a similar art" [*magos aut haruspices aut hariolos, aut certe augures uel sortilegos uel eos qui profitentur artem aliquam*] (canon 29).[36] This index of characters devoted to occultism seems to have been taken from the *Etymologiae* (8.9), yet this is not necessarily a reason for doubting that it may reflect contemporary beliefs and practices.[37] Isidore presided over this council, and he probably participated actively in generating its proceedings. The use of theoretical terminology to describe those dedicated to the art of divination and magic does not mean that they were not a tangible presence in the Visigothic kingdom. The definition taken from the *Etymologies* constituted a basis for understanding, describing, prohibiting, and punishing the activities mentioned in the canon. Some Christians (including the ecclesiastical hierarchy) celebrated, according to the deviant traditions of the pagans (*propter eorum gentilium aguntur*), the Kalends of January, singing the alleluia and deliberately ignoring the fast the Church established on that date so that it would not be desecrated by any pagan practice (canon 11).[38] Isidore himself had already alluded to this fact in his *De ecclesiasticis officiis*:

34 Rachel L. Stocking, "Martianus, Aventius and Isidore: Provincial Church Councils in Seventh-Century Spain," *Early Medieval Europe* 6 (1997), 169–88; Stocking, *Bishops, Councils, and Consensus*, 139–42.

35 Díaz and Torres, "Pervivencias paganas," 247–48; Juan Antonio Jiménez Sánchez, "Los magos en la *Hispania* tardorromana y visigoda," in *Marginados sociales y religiosos en la Hispania tardorromana y visigoda*, ed. Raúl González Salinero (Madrid: 2013), 122.

36 McKenna, *Paganism and Pagan Survivals*, 119; Nicole Zeddies, *Religio et sacrilegium. Studien zur Inkriminierung von Magie. Häresie und Heidentum* (Frankfurt: 2003), 177–82.

37 Díaz and Torres, "Pervivencias paganas," 244.

38 See McKenna, *Paganism and Pagan Survivals*, 119; Díaz and Torres, "Pervivencias paganas," 246–47. In the *Breviarium Gothorum* (PL 86, 152D) in the service of 2 January, several passages of Visigothic liturgy stressed that pagan idols were demons. See also Hillgarth, "Popular Religion," 17.

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> The church established the fast on the Kalends of January because of the errors of the pagans …. The Fathers of the Church seeing that the greater part of the human race were in thrall on that day to sacrilege or extravagance, determined that there be a public fast in all churches across the world so that men could see the depths of their depravity and the necessity of fasting in every church to atone for their sins.[39]

3 Romans, Byzantines, and Barbarians

3.1 *Theoretical Discourse: Defense of the Visigothic Identity*

Born into a family from Cartagena that was forced to immigrate to the province of Baetica, in southern Spain, following the landing of Byzantine troops in 552, Isidore could thus have cultivated a hostile attitude to the Byzantines from a very early age, although it is impossible to clearly verify this theory in Isidore's writings, despite the opinion of modern historiography.[40] Keeping in mind that Christian *romanitas* was, in a sense, still present in the Byzantine Empire, Isidore was inclined to its legitimacy and greatness, at least from a theoretical perspective (*Etym.* 15.1.42).[41] The ideological image that Isidore initially conceived of Byzantium oscillated between that of Leovigild, whose most significant act was the adoption of imperial-style ceremony in the Visigothic court,[42] and the disillusion, from an ecclesiastical perspective, of his brother Leander, who had firsthand experience dealing with Byzantine diplomats.[43] On some occasions, Isidore seems to admire the cultural model of the Byzantine court or feels compelled to adopt its ideological roots, while on others he showed a

39 "Ieiunium kalendarum ianuariarum propter errorem gentilitatis instituit ecclesia [...] Proinde ergo sancti patres considerantes maximam partem generis humani eodem die huiusmodi sacrilegiis ac luxoriis inseruire statuerunt in uniuerso mundo per omnes ecclesias publicum ieiunium, per quod agnoscerent homines in tantum se praue agere ut pro eorum peccatis necesse esset omnibus ecclesiis ieiunare," Isidore, *De ecclesiasticis officiis* 1.41, trans. Thomas L. Knoebel, *Isidore of Seville: De ecclesiasticis officiis* (New York: 2008), 63.

40 Luis A. García Moreno, "La Andalucía de Isidoro," in *Actas del II Congreso de Historia de Andalucía* (Seville: 1994), 573; José Marín, "Noticias bizantinas en España. El caso de san Isidoro de Sevilla," *Temas Medievales* 17 (2009), 63.

41 Marín, "Noticias bizantinas," 62.

42 Javier Arce, "*Leovigildus rex* y el ceremonial de la corte visigótica," in *Visigoti e longobardi*, eds. Javier Arce and Paolo Delogu (Florence: 2001), 79–92.

43 Jacques Fontaine, "Isidoro de Sevilla frente a la España bizantina," in *V reunió d'Arqueologia cristiana hispànica* (Barcelona: 2000), 40.

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profound distrust for the Byzantines in the political and religious sphere, denouncing acrimoniously the *Romana insolentia* (*Hist. Goth.* 54.15–16).

Byzantine *Spania* was in direct confrontation with the Visigoths, who ruled over the rest of the Iberian Peninsula (the Suevic kingdom of northwest Spain no longer existed as a separate political entity in Isidore's day). As a result, Isidore of Seville established a new Hispano-Gothic ideology which would, without renouncing Roman heritage and tradition, annul any justification for the Byzantine presence in the south of Spain.[44] In order to attain this goal it was necessary, first of all, to banish from descriptions of the Visigoths the use of the word "barbarian", a term that had been used to refer to the Visigoths since their earliest appearance in written sources, usually in direct contrast to the Romans.

In his historical writings Isidore defended the religious and political legitimacy of the Visigoths, deliberately ignoring their Arian past, and denigrated other barbaric populations that were militarily weaker or deviated from the true Catholic faith.[45] The concept of "barbaric" became an apologetic instrument for the Goths. In fact, in his *Historiae*, all adversaries of the Goths (save for the Byzantine Empire, evidently) would be considered barbaric: the Sueves, Vandals, and Alans were explicitly described as such (12; 22; 68), and, implicitly, so were the Huns, Persians, Franks, and Basques (27–29; 36; 41–42; 54; 59; and 63). The defense of the *ciuilitas*, naturally associated with *Nicene* Christianity,[46] was from that point on the responsibility of both Romans and Visigoths.[47] However, the "nationalist" exaltation of the Gothic people demanded that Isidore adapt or even devalue the Roman myth in relation to a new political reality: as shown with the consolidation of Visigothic power in Hispania.[48] In

44 Fontaine, "Isidoro de Sevilla frente a la España bizantina," 32.

45 Jamie Wood, *The Politics of Identity in Visigothic Spain. Religion and Power in the Histories of Isidore of Seville* (Leiden: 2012), 153–61 (156: "In the historical writings he does a thorough job of presenting these groups as illegitimate in both the political and the religious spheres"). See also Jamie Wood, "*Religiones* and *gentes* in Isidore of Seville's *Chronica maiora*," in *Post-Roman Transitions. Christian and Barbarian Identities in the Early Medieval West*, eds. Walter Pohl and Gerda Heydemann (Turnhout: 2013), 160–62.

46 In his encyclopaedia Isidore reaffirms being a citizen of a noble civilization, both Roman and Christian. See Giulio d'Onofrio, "Il rinascere della *Christianitas* (secoli VI–VIII)," in *Storia della teologia nel Medioevo, I. I principi*, ed. Giulio d'Onofrio (Casale Monferrato: 1996), 65–66.

47 See Federico Mario Beltrán Torreira, "El concepto de barbarie en la *Hispania* visigoda," *Antigüedad y Cristianismo* 3 (1986), 57.

48 Suzzane Teillet, *Des Goths à la nation gothique. Les origines d l'idée de nation en Occident du Ve au VIIe siècle* (Paris, 1984), 463–501; Juan Ramón Carbó García, "Godos y getas en la historiografía de la tardoantigüedad y del Medievo: un problema de identidad y de legitimación socio-política," *Studia Historia. Historia Antigua* 22 (2004), 199–200.

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any case, the Rome that Isidore evokes in his *Laus Hispaniae* emanates from Western Latinity, not Eastern Rome.[49] It was in this way that the Visigoths had converted themselves into the heirs and continuators of true *romanitas*, thus removing any ideological claims to be such which emanated from the Byzantine world.

3.2 *Praxis: A Providential Kingdom*

The possibility of cooperation among Catholics to combat Arian heresy could have spawned in Isidore a better opinion about the Byzantines.[50] However, Jacques Fontaine has suggested that Byzantine rule over some dioceses located in the ecclesiastical province of Baetica, still under Isidore's authority, would have hindered any sort of attempt to reach an understanding with imperial forces, including in the religious realm.[51] In fact, the "rootlessness" of some dioceses located in Byzantine territory could have greatly damaged, according to the author, the metropolitan authority of Seville.[52] Because there were no doctrinal frictions between the two sides of the territorial conflict, communication between dioceses was not affected. There is even evidence of collaboration between the dioceses under Byzantine rule and those of the Spanish-Visigothic Church after the kingdom's official conversion to Catholicism.[53]

Nevertheless, the Byzantine occupation of the southeast of the Iberian Peninsula until the reign of Suinthila probably seemed to Isidore a momentary frustration of providential plans in favor of Visigothic power in *Hispania*. However, successful military campaigns against the *milites romani* by the *dux* (and future king) Suinthila during the reign of Sisebut (*Hist. Goth*. 47; 61–62; *Chron*., 414–17)[54] prepared the way for the final conquest, around the year 625, of the few Byzantine territories in the Iberian Peninsula. As happened with the famous victories over the Franks in *Septimania* (*Hist. Goth*. 41; 54),[55] Isidore took

49 Fontaine, "Isidoro de Sevilla frente a la España bizantina," 33; Marín, "Noticias bizantinas," 63.

50 Marín, "Noticias bizantinas," 43.

51 Fontaine, "Isidoro de Sevilla frente a la España bizantina," 30.

52 Fontaine, *Isidoro de Sevilla. Génesis y originalidad*, 282.

53 Margarita Vallejo, *Hispania y Bizancio. Una relación desconocida* (Madrid: 2012), 245: "la Iglesia hispana bizantina era una Iglesia militante niceno-calcedonense, por lo que, una vez que los visigodos se conviertan a esta fe, no dudará en trabajar a favor de la unión de la Península bajo un único poder, en este caso el visigodo."

54 See Pablo C. Díaz, "En tierra de nadie: visigodos frente a bizantinos. Reflexiones sobre la frontera," in *Bizancio y la Península Ibérica. De la Antigüedad tardía a la Edad Moderna*, eds. Inmaculada Pérez Martín and Pedro Bádenas de la Peña (Madrid: 2004), 45–46; Vallejo, *Hispania y Bizancio*, 334–44.

55 Fontaine, *Isidoro de Sevilla. Génesis y originalidad*, 280–81.

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pleasure in narrating the exploits of the Visigoth monarchs and in pointing out that it was Suinthila who managed to assert Visigothic rule over a unified and independent *Hispania*.[56] It is at this moment that Isidore assigned the term *imperium* to the power of the Goths (*Hist. Goth*. 65.10–12) and the title of *princeps populorum* to the virtuous Gothic monarch (*Hist. Goth*. 64.1–11).[57] According to Isidore, none of their victories over the powerful Byzantine Empire would have been possible without divine help.[58] M.R. Valverde Castro asserts that

> the divine origins of royal power lay at the heart of his political thought. We encounter a perfect distillation of this idea in the phrase *gratia divina* which Isidore uses to refer to the accession of Suintilia. It is an expression which concisely expresses the concept that royal power is a result of divine favor: that a monarch's kingdom is given to him by God's grace.[59]

For Isidore of Seville there was no doubt that the Goths, defenders of the true faith, had replaced the Romans. In fact, his apologetical vision led him to believe that only the Visigothic kingdom could offer the Church the necessary conditions for its providential progress; whereas the Byzantine Empire, a nest of heresies (*Etym*. 8.5), had recently been sympathetic towards heterodox doctrines. It was for this reason that the emperor had lost his former function as *rector ecclesiae*.[60] There is no question that Isidore had in mind the "Three Chapters Controversy" (*c*.544)[61] that emerged in the mid-6th century because of Emperor Justinian's failed attempt to re-establish, through an edict, ecclesiastical unity with the Monophysites. The writings of three theologians (Theodore of Mopsuestia, Theodoret of Cyrrhus, and Ibbas of Edessa) were condemned at the Second Council of Constantinople (the Fifth Ecumenical Council, held in 553). This had repercussions in *Hispania.*[62]

56 Wood, *Politics of Identity*, 182; Dell'Elicine, *En el principio fue el Verbo*, 171.

57 See Valverde Castro, *Ideología, simbolismo y ejercicio del poder real*, 155 and 212.

58 On the process of the ideological construction of the Isidorian concept of the "new chosen people," see Dell'Elicine, *En el principio fue el Verbo*, 166–77.

59 Valverde Castro, *Ideología, simbolismo y ejercicio del poder real*, 202; Wood, "*Religiones* and *gentes*," 133.

60 See Cristiana Godoy and Josep Vilella, "De la *fides ghotica* a la Ortodoxia nicena: inicio de la teología política visigoda," *Antigüedad y Cristianismo* 3 (1986), 133; Fontaine, *Isidoro de Sevilla. Génesis y originalidad*, 282; Wood, *Politics of Identity*, 208–09; Wood, "*Religiones* and *gentes*," 126, 131, 142–46, and 159.

61 Wood, *Politics of Identity*, 212.

62 See Vallejo, *Hispania y Bizancio*, 132–35.

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Isidore mentions an imperial rescript against bishops from the region of Illyrium and Africa, who had refused to condemn the Three Chapters (*De vir. ill.* 18).[63] The orthodoxy of the Visigoth monarchs, by contrast, was beyond suspicion.[64] At the Fourth Council of Toledo, inspired and presided over by Isidore of Seville in 633, the trust that bishops had placed in monarchs to defend the one true faith was permanently sealed[65]:

> We ask with due humility that you, our present King [i.e. Sisenand], and the future kings of the ages to come be moderate and kindly towards those who are your subjects, that you rule with justice and piety the peoples entrusted to you by God, that you respond to Christ who has given you these things by ruling with a humble heart and devotion to good deeds.[66]

4 Heretics

4.1 *Theoretical Discourse: The Loss of Ecclesial Unity*

Given that the error of heresy emerged from incorrect interpretation of the Scriptures (*Sent*. 1.16.8; 3.12.2–4; *Quaest. in Exod*. 36), Isidore took it upon himself to present, with a clear pedagogical intention, a catalog of the main deviations that had developed through time from the doctrinal core of Christianity and Judaism. In order to carry out this task Isidore followed the writings of Augustine and Gregory the Great very closely. This detailed list would impede the clergy from interpreting the Scriptures wrongly, and in turn would dispel any dangers brought about by heretics (*Sent*. 1.16.13–14; *De eccl. off*. 2.23; *Alleg*.

63 Wood, *Politics of Identity*, 213.

64 Fontaine, *Isidoro de Sevilla. Génesis y originalidad*, 283.

65 Dell'Elicine, *En el principio fue el Verbo*, 180: "Lo que Toledo IV instituye es una forma de pensar y de habitar ese lazo social: en efecto, desde las palabras y desde las prácticas, esa sociedad se percibe a sí misma como una *ecclesia*, o aún más, como un pueblo elegido, como un nuevo Israel. En ese esquema, la clerecía participa junto al rey de la conducción de ese pueblo, en una postura que la sitúa paradójicamente por debajo y por encima de él."

66 "[…] Te quoque praesentem regem [Sisenandus] futurosque aetatum sequentium principes humilitate qua debemus deposcimus ut moderati et mites erga subiectos exsistentes cum iustitia et pietate populos a Deo uobis creditos regatis, bonamque uicissitudinem, qui uso constituit, largitori Christo respondeatis regnantes in humilitate cordis cum studio bonae actionis […]," IV Toledo, 75.

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127; *Quaest. in Gen*. 4.6–7).[67] Isidore thought that in order to combat heresy effectively, it was convenient only to recognize the dogmas on which heresies were based (*Etym*. 8.3.7), because even within the Church[68] faithful Christians were not exempt from falling prey to its pernicious traps:

> [...] These heresies, although they disagree with each other, differing among themselves in many errors, nevertheless conspire with a common name against the Church of God. But also, whoever understands the Holy Scriptures otherwise than the meaning of the Holy Spirit, by whom they were written, can, even if he does not depart from the Church, be called a heretic.[69]

While heresies sowed discord among the Church, Isidore did not deem them a danger in themselves as they could provide valuable proof in favor of the one true faith and strengthen the orthodox doctrine of the Catholic Church throughout the world (*pro eo quod universaliter per omnem sit mundum diffusa*, *Sent*. 1.16.5). Isidore expressed his views as follows:

> The Church has grown in doctrine because of the depravity of heresy. Previously it flourished with but a simple faith. With the rise of heretics doctors of the Faith grew up and because of the sharpness of these heresies church leaders arose. For now we see a brighter assertion of the Truth, whenever some dissent from it is found.[70]

Isidore compared mosquitos from the third biblical plague of Egypt with the numerous heretics who, with their vexing "bites," are ever unrelenting in their

67 See Beltrán Torreira, "La herejía y sus imágenes," 17; Mitre, "Vicisitudes políticas y cultura antiherética," 98–99.

68 Referring to the wicked Elihu from the book of Job, Isidore cautions in his *Prooemia in libros Veteris et Noui Testamenti* 32 (PL 83, 163) against arrogant preachers who, from within the Church, plot against her.

69 "Haec sunt haereses aduersus catholicam fidem exortae, et ab Apostolis et a sanctis Patribus uel Conciliis praedamnatae: quae dum in se multis erroribus diuisae inuicem sibi dissentiant, communi tamen nomine aduersus Ecclesiam Dei conspirant. Sed et quicumque aliter Scripturam sanctam intellegit quam sensus Spiritus sancti flagitat, a quo conscripta est, licet de Ecclesia non recesserit, tamen haereticus appellari potest," Isidore, *Etymologiae* 8.5.70, trans. Barney et al., 178.

70 "Causa prauitatis haereticae doctrinis est propagata Ecclesia; nam antea simplici tantum fide uigebat. Haereticorum igitur occasione propagati sunt doctores in fide, et per acumina haeresum Ecclesiae magistri creuerunt. Nam tunc clarius manifestatur ueritatis assertio, quando patuerit quaelibet dissensio," Isidore, *Sententiae* 1.16.5.

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attacks on the faith of true Christians (*Quaest. in Exod.* 14.4–6, *PL* 83, 292–93). In his commentary, Leviticus-style, he compares heresy (also associated with Judaism) with leprosy. He adds that it had an off-white color typical of the illness and symbolic of those heretics who, similar to those adhering to the doctrines of Pelagianism and Novatianism, falsely proclaimed their purity (*Quaest. in Lev*. 11.12, *PL* 83, 329). For this very reason, priests especially should avoid mixing with these "neighbours" and "mercenaries," allusions to heretics (falsely calling themselves Christians) and Jews (carnal servants of the Law of Moses) (*Quest. in Vet. Test.: in Lev*. 12.13–14, *PL* 83, 332).[71]

In any case, the wisdom and patience of the Church provided a common front against the attacks of heretics and pagans (*Sent*. 1.16.2 and 4).[72] Its Catholicity denoted an evident superiority in regards to the different "small heretical groups" (*conuenticula haereticorum*),[73] even though it could deteriorate very seriously given its enemies' combined efforts to upset it: "those who are divided against one another are found at times to be united in their opposition to the Church," (*qui inuicem diuisi sunt, in aduersitate Ecclesiae simul existunt uni Sent*. 1.16.10; cf. *Etym*. 8.5.70).[74] The greatest threat the Church faced from heresy was precisely its capacity to break ecclesiastical unity: "The heretics learn their lies with great zeal and struggle mightily not to come into the unity of the Church."[75]

Isidore de Seville was convinced that the only way to establish the celestial Jerusalem was through the peace and unity within the Church and establishing true doctrine: "there, when all hostility has been overwhelmed, one will possess peace, which is Christ, by gazing upon him face to face" (*Etym*. 8.1.6).[76] The synthesis and interpretation of Isidore's stance against heresy, manifest in his eighth book of the *Etymologiae*, can be rightfully summarized in the words of Angelo Valastro Canale:

> Heresy, the daughter of pride threatened the foundations of Christian unity, a unity which in the eyes of Isidore, was both religious and political at the same time. Heresy thus ought to be extirpated in order to guarantee the building of the Church Universal, in other words to guarantee the

71 Beltrán Torreira, "La herejía y sus imágenes," 22.

72 Fontaine, *Isidoro de Sevilla. Génesis y originalidad*, 181–82.

73 Isidore, *Etymologiae* 8.1.1; *Sententiae* 1.16.6; *De ecclesiasticis officiis* 1.16.1. See Beltrán Torreira, "La herejía y sus imágenes," 26.

74 See Beltrán Torreira, "La herejía y sus imágenes," 26.

75 Isidore, *Sententiae* 1.16.9: "Haeretici ingenti studio mendacia sua discunt, et labore uehementi, ne ad unitatem Ecclesiae ueniant, decertant."

76 Trans. Barney et al., 173.

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> possibility of re-establishing the lost harmony of mankind and to anticipate in a way the direct apprehension of Christ's Peace, that of the King of the celestial Jerusalem.

Thus, for Isidore, without orthodoxy being imposed and defended by the Church against the disunity that heresy sought there was no possibility of establishing political and religious stability in the Visigothic kingdom.

4.2 *Praxis: Averted Threats*

According to our sources, it does not seem that Isidore had to contend with many heretical movements during his time as head of the bishopric of Seville. While we can state that Arianism had ceased to be an urgent problem for the Church during the period that Isidore was writing his most important works, there are some indications that he could have participated in the confrontations which took place between Catholics and Arians shortly after the Third Council of Toledo (589). At least, this is what Bishop Taio of Zaragoza could have tried to convey when he stated that Isidore "expelled the dirt of the Arian heresy from all over *Hispania*, persecuting it with the world of God."[77] Furthermore, the actions carried out by Isidore during a synod against a so-called Sintharius, recorded in a letter from Braulio of Zaragoza, may have been related to the struggle to eradicate Arian heresy from the kingdom which had recently converted to Catholicism.[78] In any case, it is highly probable that Isidore's behavior took place in a clearly anti-heretical context:

> I ask you to use your influence with your son and lord, the king, to have to me right away the minutes of the council in which Sintharius was thoroughly cooked, even if not completely purified, with the fire of your inquisition. I have already asked his highness for this, since I am very much in need of it to investigate the truth in the council [...].[79]

77 Eduard Anspach, *Taionis et Isidori: nova fragmenta et opera* (Madrid: 1930), 61. See also Juan Gil Fernández, "Isidoro como obispo," in *San Isidoro, doctor Hispaniae*, ed. Julián González (Seville: 2002), 89.

78 Beltrán Torreira, "La herejía y sus imágenes," 16.

79 "Gesta etiam sinodi, in quo Sintharius examinis uestri igne etsi non purificatus inuenitur tamen decoctus, quaeso ut uestro instinctu a filio uestro domno rege nobis dirigatur cito. Nam et nostra eius sic flagitauit gloriam suggestio, quia multum in concilio pro inuestiganda opus est ueritate," Braulio, *Epistula* 2 (to Isidore), trans. Claude W. Barlow, *Iberian Fathers, Volume 2: Braulio of Saragosa, Fructuosus of Braga* (Washington, DC: 1969), 17–18.

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In the twelfth canon of the Second Council of Seville, over which Isidore presided in 619, we find a description of the conversion to Catholicism of a Syrian bishop *ex haerese Acephalorum* who defended, so it seemed, a Monophysite theology. As described in the canon, this acephalous heresy (literally meaning "without a head," given that it belonged to one of the Monophysite communities completely separated from all Christian patriarchates) "negated the existence of two natures in Christ and affirmed that deity could suffer."[80]

The mystery of Christ's Incarnation had divided the early Church since the councils of Ephesus (431) and Chalcedon (451). The Catholic Church's official doctrine, sanctioned by Pope Leo I, recognized two indissoluble natures in the person of Christ. However, not all bishops adhered to this theological interpretation and maintained that there could only be one nature in Christ ("Monophysitism," from *mono* "one," and *physis*, "nature"). For this reason, it was impossible to admit the principle of divine impassivity.[81] Given that this controversy had political and social ramifications, the Emperor Justinian (527–65) attempted to settle the issue by promoting the concept of Christ's Monothelitism (from *thelema*, "will") which in the end did not satisfy either of two opposing sides. The Catholic doctrine was then forcibly imposed in the East, leading to the exile of many bishops.[82] It is probable that the difficulties that the Monophysites faced motivated the Syrian bishop known as Gregory, who, according to Braulio of Zaragoza,[83] went into (forced or voluntary) exile and later appeared before the Second Council of Seville in 619.[84] It is not unlikely that the matter was taken before the council because the bishops were

80 In his *Chronica* 385, Isidore mentioned the appearance in the East of a heresy called acephalous ("without a head") which was in direct opposition with the decisions of the Council of Chalcedon. He described the heresy as a "pest" and suggested that even in his own day (*hactenus*) Christianity still suffered from it. A similar explanation with a brief description on the Monophysite Christology ("unam in eius persona naturam praedicant") appears in *Etymologiae* 8.5.66. See Fontaine, "Isidoro de Sevilla frente a la España bizantina," 34–35. According to Wood, *Politics of Identity*, 215, "Isidore's depiction of the emperors as supporting the *Acefali* and opposing Chalcedon showed that the Romans were heretics, undermined their claim to be defenders of orthodoxy, and suggested that their actions had led to the emergence of further heresies."

81 On theological currents such as Theopaschite Monophysitism, see Paul Gavrilyuk, *The Suffering of Impassible God. The Dialectis of Patristic Thought* (Oxford: 2004).

82 See Gil Fernández, "Isidoro como obispo," 89–91.

83 Braulio of Zaragoza, *Renotatio librorum Domini Isidori*, 65.

84 L.A. García Moreno, "Disidencia religiosa y poder episcopal en la España tardoantigua (ss. V–VII)," in *De Constantino a Carlomagno. Disidentes, heterodoxos, marginados*, eds. Francisco Javier Lomas and Federico Devís (Cádiz: 1992), 150, asserted, without any proof or sound arguments, that the Monophysite bishop was from the part of Egypt that had been invaded by Chosroes II. Without discarding the possibility that he had come directly

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concerned that this heretic could confuse the faithful Christians of Baetica.[85] From the information found in the canon we deduce that the Syrian priest did not accept the arguments of the Baetican bishops and refused to admit that Christ had two natures, while maintaining that the deity was capable of suffering. However, under constant pressure he capitulated and retracted (*gratia diuina eductus*) his error before all the bishops present at the synod:

> By confronting him with the evidence of our Lord Jesus Christ's incarnation and reading to him the views of the Holy Fathers, we then with every exhortation and with due priestly modesty invited him to embrace the rectitude of the True Faith. By such wholesome advice after stubbornly rejecting communion in many lengthy struggles, finally he was enlightened by Divine Grace and abjured his heresy, while standing in the midst of us, and confessed that there are two natures and one person in our one and same Lord Jesus Christ, professing that His divine nature was impassible and that only in His human nature did He endure the afflictions of suffering and the cross.[86]

Isidore deemed it convenient to add at the end of the council's proceedings, as the thirteenth canon, a brief theological treatise (not exempt from doctrinal errors itself) in which he defended the double nature of Christ as human and divine.[87] This could potentially have served as a reminder of the recent case of

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from the East, Díaz, "En tierra de nadie," 58, proposes the hypothesis that the Syrian bishop could have come from the peninsula's southern region occupied by the Byzantines.

85 Fontaine, *Isidoro de Sevilla. Génesis y originalidad*, 97; Gil Fernández, "Isidoro como obispo," 91.

86 "prolatis illi de incarnatione domini nostri Iesu Christi testimoniis sanctorumque patrum sententiis recitatis omni eum deinde exhortatione ad verae fidei rectitudinem sacerdotali modestia invitavimus. Qui salutaribus monitis pertinaciter per multos diuturnosque conflictus communionem renitens, tandem gratia divina edoctus cunctis coram adstantibus haeresem propriam abdicavit, duasque naturas et unam personam in uno eodemque domino nostro Iesu Christo confessus est, credens inpassibilem naturam deitatis atque in sola humanitate suscepisse infirmitates passionis et crucis," 11 Seville, 12. In the *Renotatio librorum domini Isidori* Braulio of Zaragoza praised Isidore, describing the episode as follows: "with what a flood of eloquence, with what barbs of Divine Scriptures and proofs from the Fathers he confounded the heresy of the Acephalites, is revealed in the acts of the Council which met under his leadership at Seville, in which he established the Catholic truth against Gregory, the leader of the said heresy," trans. Barlow, 142. See also José Carlos Martín, *La renotatio librorum domini Isidori de Braulio de Zaragoza († 651)* (Logroño: 2002), 287–88, n. 43.

87 Fontaine, *Isidoro de Sevilla. Génesis y originalidad*, 97; Gil Fernández, "Isidoro como obispo," 91; Wood, *Politics of Identity*, 216–17. According to Fontaine, "Isidoro de Sevilla frente

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the Syrian heretic and as a manual for future conversions from error to Catholicism.

It did not matter that the bishops, with Isidore as their leader, twisted (indubitably out of ignorance) the doctrine of the *Acephali*, a Monophysite group that continued to exist, according to Anastasius of Sinai and George of Pisidia, as a Monophysite group in the 7th century. The bishops at the Second Council of Seville say that the Syrian bishop denied the *Proprietas* of the two natures in Christ, implying that after the union each nature had a different *Proprietas*, and that as such he defended *deitas passibilis* (*Theopaschism*), when in fact the Monophysite doctrine acknowledged the *deitas non passibilis*. The canon from the Seville council bears witness to the fact that the bishops interpreted this heretical doctrine incorrectly, possibly a sign of the distinctiveness of Western Christianity at the time.[88] However, none of the bishops was interested in shedding light on the heretical doctrine of the Syrian priest. It was sufficient to denounce the danger brought about by those situated outside orthodoxy, the perverse "other." L.S.B. MacCoull states, in relation to this particular incident: "The Syrian, doubly caught between the fallout of the Persian-Byzantine and Visigothic-Byzantine wars, is being represented as 'the other' whose terminology came from a world the westerners did not understand […]."[89] Above all, Isidore's most important concern was with producing some doctrinal statement (be it intelligible or not) which placed the Syrian outside orthodoxy as defined by the Church.

5 Jews

5.1 *Theoretical Discourse: The Anti-Jewish Controversy*

Following the Patristic tradition of the *Adversus Iudaeos* genre, Isidore incorporated the main themes he had used to shape his anti-Jewish arguments in his most important works (*Etymologiae*, *Sententiarum libri*, *Allegoriae quaedam sanctae Scripturae*, *Quaestiones in Vetus Testamentum*) and wrote, at the request of his sister Florentina, an exegetic text directed specifically against the

a la España bizantina," 36–37, with this florilegium Isidore wished to make clergy in Baetica aware of the scriptural and Patristic cornerstones of Nicaean Christology, in contrast to the heretical lines of thought that originated in the Byzantine East, and so praise the unequivocally Catholic nature of the Visigothic Church. See also Wood, *Politics of Identity*, 212.

88 L.S.B. MacCoull, "Isidore and the *Akephaloi*," *Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies* 39 (1998), 170–74.

89 MacCoull, "Isidore and the Akephaloi," 177–78.

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Jewish religion, entitled *De fide catholica ex ueteri et nouo testamento contra Iudaeos*.[90] In the first book he stated that the Jews' hardness of heart was manifested in their denial of Jesus as the Messiah, and their reluctance to follow Christian dogmas, which he claimed was mentioned in the Old Testament. The second book addressed the hereditary condemnation of the Jews, a result of their obstinate and ignominious rejection of Jesus as well as the repeal of the Jewish Law for the New Law.[91] Even though it has often been pointed out that this work lacks originality because of its similarities to biblical *testimonia* (as with the *Ad Quirinum* of Cyprian),[92] it contains long exegetic passages written in a typically Isidorian style.[93] Furthermore,[94] there are scholars who consider these writings an attempt to attract the Jews to Christianity[95] and argue that Isidore intended to present a model of the Christian message in order to

90 Both Braulio of Zaragoza in his *Renotatio librorum domini Isidori* and Ildefonsus of Toledo in his *De viris illustribus* 8 assert that this was an eminently polemical work.

91 See Arthur Lukyn Williams, *Adversus Judaeos. A Bird's-Eye view of Christian Apologiae until the Renaissance* (Cambridge: 1935); 216–18; Bernard Blumenkranz, *Les auteurs chrétiens latins du Moyen Âge sur les Juifs et le judaïsme* (Paris: 1960), 88–101; Bat-Sheva Albert, "*De fide catholica contra Judaeos* d'Isidore de Séville: la polémique antijudaïque dans l'Espagne du VIIe siècle," *Revue des Études Juives* 141 (1982), 289–316; Heinz Schreckenberg, *Die christlichen Adversus-Judaeos-Texte und ihr literarisches und historisches Umfeld* (*1–11. Jh.*), 3rd ed. (Frankfurt-am-Main: 1995), 438–41; Luis Díez Merino, "San Isidoro de Sevilla y la polémica judeocristiana," in *La controversia judeocristiana en España* (*Desde los orígenes hasta el siglo XIII*), ed. Carlos del Valle (Madrid: 1998), 77–110; Jeremy Cohen, *Living Letters of the Law. Ideas of the Jew in Medieval Christianity* (Berkeley: 1999), 95–122; Giuseppe Laras, *Le dispute giudaico-cristiane nel Medioevo* (Milan: 2000), 61–63; Drews, *Juden und Judentum bei Isidor von Sevilla*; Jorge Yepes Temiño, *Estudio histórico-teológico del De fide Catholica de San Isidoro de Sevilla en el contexto del diálogo judeo-cristiano del reino visigodo* (PhD dissertation, Pontificia Universitas Sanctae Crucis, Rome, 2002); Andrés Barcala Muñoz, *Biblioteca antijudía de los escritores eclesiásticos hispanos, II. Siglos VI–VII: el reino visigodo de Toledo* (Madrid: 2005), 333–400; Wolfram Drews, *The Unknown Neighbour. The Jew in the Thought of Isidore of Seville* (Leiden: 2006); Eva Castro Caridad and Francisco Peña Fernández, *Isidoro de Sevilla. Sobre la fe católica contra los judíos* (Seville: 2012); Luis Pomer Monferrer, "El *De fide catholica* de Isidoro de Sevilla y la literatura romana *adversus Iudaeos*," *Revue des Études Tardo-Antiques*, 5 (2015–16), 1–23; Eva Castro Caridad and Xosé A. López Silva, "San Isidoro de Sevilla y los judíos: apología o catequética," in *San Isidoro de Sevilla en Sevilla*, ed. J. Sánchez Herrero (Seville: 2018), 87–98.

92 Cohen, *Living Letters of the Law*, 97; Gil Fernández, "Isidoro como obispo," 92.

93 Drews, *The Unknown Neighbour*, 35; Castro Caridad and Peña Fernández, *Isidoro de Sevilla*, 22 and 25.

94 Drews, *The Unknown Neighbour*, 111–36.

95 Francisco Javier Lozano Sebastián, *San Isidoro de Sevilla. Teología del pecado y la conversión* (Burgos: 1976), 40. According to Díez Merino, "San Isidoro de Sevilla," 95: "los enemigos de la fe a quienes San Isidoro trataba de convencer de la fe católica eran los judíos de su época" (cf. 93 and 110).

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convert the Jews through persuasion.[96] It has even been suggested, within the context of the forced conversions initiated by King Sisebut in 616, that Isidore was motivated by pastoral considerations, presupposing that Isidore would have tried to convince and instruct those Jews who had recently received baptism.[97] Although in most cases the author refers to the Jews in the third person (*agnoscant Iudaei*, *respondeant Iudaei*),[98] on other occasions he uses the imperative and addresses them using the second-person plural.[99] However, this could perhaps be interpreted "as literary recourse to enliven the *expositio*."[100] Besides, we must keep in mind that if this work was written between 614 and 615,[101] it was before Sisebut's general decree of forced conversions (in the year 616), and, as such, it could not have been designed to teach Jewish converts. At the same time, it would be strange for Isidore to ignore Sisebut's decree, whose specific structure was not consistent with the hypothetical pastoral intention.[102] Isidore's *De fide catholica contra Iudaeos* was eminently controversial.[103] Its author manifests a clear "catechetical" intention, as he intended to indoctrinate and strengthen his readers' faith and prove "the ignorance of the unfaithful Jews" (*infidelium Iudaeorum imperitiam probet*).[104] This work could even be considered an instructional charter for the clergy, especially if we keep in mind

96 Ursicino Domínguez del Val, *Historia de la antigua literatura hispanorromana, III. San Isidoro de Sevilla* (Madrid: 1998), 78.

97 Lukyn Williams, *Adversus Judaeos*, 217; Fausto Parente, "La controversia tra ebrei e cristiani in Francia e in Spagna dal VI al IX secolo," *Settimane di Studio* 26 (1980), 566; Attilio Carpin, *Il battesimo in Isidoro di Siviglia* (Bologna: 1984), 55; Díez Merino, "San Isidoro de Sevilla," 110; Fontaine, *Isidoro de Sevilla. Génesis y originalidad*, 138; and, recently, Rodrigo Laham Cohen, "Entre la represión y la tolerancia. El derrotero de los judíos en tiempos de Gregorio Magno e Isidoro de Sevilla," *Trabajos y Comunicaciones* 36 (2010), 14–15 and 18.

98 Drews, *The Unknown Neighbour*, 118.

99 For example, Isidore, *De fide Catholica contra Iudaeos* 2.24.3. See Díez Merino, "San Isidoro de Sevilla," 95.

100 Castro Caridad and Peña Fernández, *Isidoro de Sevilla*, 30.

101 Cohen, *Living Letters of the Law*, 106–07; Castro Caridad and Peña Fernández, *Isidoro de Sevilla*, 21 and 36.

102 Albert, "*De fide catholica contra Judaeos*," 305–06; Raúl González Salinero, *Las conversiones forzosas de los judíos en el reino visigodo* (Rome: 2000), 121–22; Castro Caridad and Peña Fernández, *Isidoro de Sevilla*, 19; Drews, *The Unknown Neighbour*, 117–18. Alternatively, Isidore does not suggest in this work that conversion had to take place through persuasion and not by force, as was suggested by Patrick Jerome Mullins, *The Spiritual Life according to Saint Isidore of Seville* (Washington, DC: 1940), 34.

103 Drews, *The Unknown Neighbour*, 118: "Isidore cannot have hoped to convince or impress Jews with his arguments. Apparently active mission among Jews did not form part of his programme for Christianising Visigothic society."

104 As he affirms in the dedicatory letter to the work, Castro Caridad and Peña Fernández, *Isidoro de Sevilla*, 19.

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Isidore's constant preoccupation with their training.[105] Despite the fact that it did not reflect contemporary reality,[106] the distorted image of the Jews that the bishop of Seville presents in his works was intended to create, both in the clergy and in their congregations, a negative predisposition towards the beliefs and customs of the Jewish religion.

For instance, Isidore viewed circumcision as a distinctive sign devoid of any salvific value, while baptism (or spiritual circumcision) cleansed all sin and offered eternal salvation to the Christians.[107] When he refers to the *Sabbat* he even goes so far as to accuse the Jews of appropriating the name "Saturday," as they did not consider it a spiritual rest. The true sabbatical rest was the one affecting the soul and not the one the Hebrews observed, which was bereft of any justification (*De fide* 2.15.1–2).[108] So discredited was this precept in Isidore's eyes that he attacked it as aggressively as possible: "The idle festival of the Jews [the sabbath] is spent in extravagance, drunkenness, and carousing, all giving themselves over to lust, and to enjoyment of the earthly life, serving the stomach and sex."[109] Isidore followed the same approach and tried to undercut the religious value of other Jewish festivities, despite the fact that he did not speak Hebrew and possessed a very deficient knowledge of Judaic practices and beliefs. For this reason, his information is always imprecise and superficial, as he often made mistakes with regards to the exact date of these festivities. Nevertheless, his distorted knowledge was more than sufficient to scorn the Jews vehemently.[110] Maintaining a consistent line of reasoning, Isidore attacks the

105 González Salinero, *Las conversiones forzosas*, 122; Castro Caridad and Peña Fernández, *Isidoro de Sevilla*, 31. See also Carmen Codoñer, "Isidoro de Sevilla," in *La Hispania visigótica y mozárabe. Dos épocas en su literatura*, ed. Carmen Codoñer (Salamanca: 2010), 141, who considers that this work was, like the *Differentiae*, orientated "to the defense of the Catholic faith and instruction in the orthodoxy of this religion," and Jamie Wood, "A Family Affair. Leander, Isidore and the Legacy of Gregory the Great in Spain," in *Isidore of Seville and his Reception in the Early Middle Ages. Transmitting and Transforming Knowledge*, eds. Andrew Fear and Jamie Wood (Amsterdam: 2016), 38–39.

106 Castro Caridad and Peña Fernández, *Isidoro de Sevilla*, 37.

107 *De fide* 2.24.1 and 2.24.10. See Raúl González Salinero, "Catholic Anti-Judaism in Visigothic Spain," in *The Visigoths. Studies in Culture and Society*, ed. Alberto Ferreiro (Leiden: 1999), 132. But heretical baptism did not wash clean sins; this occurred through the Catholic procedure (*Sent*. 1.22.1).

108 González Salinero, "Catholic Anti-Judaism," 133; Raúl González Salinero, "Un antecedente: la persecución contra los judíos en el reino visigodo," in *El antisemitismo en España*, eds. Gonzalo Álvarez Chillida and Ricardo Izquierdo Benito (Cuenca: 2007), 81–82.

109 "Ista autem Judaeorum otiosa festivitas consumitur in luxuriis, et ebrietatibus, et comessationibus, deditis omnibus in libidine, et in fructum temporalis vitae, ventri veneri que servientibus." Isidore, *De fide Catholica contra Iudaeos* 2.15.5.

110 Albert, "*De fide catholica contra Judaeos*," 294 and 300.

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Jew's physical sacrifices (*De fide* 2.17.3) and states with great contempt his repugnance for their alimentary restrictions, the observance of which would be greatly pernicious for those who followed the straight path of Christianity (*De fide* 2.18.2; 2.19; 2.28.3).[111] He was of the opinion that no effort was to great to reject the *pernitiosa Iudaeorum perfidia* (*De fide* 1.1.2; 1.4.12) emanating from their incredulity and hardness of heart[112]:

> The Jews who with their cursed incredulity deny Christ, the Son of God, impious and hard of heart they do not believe the ancient prophets and are closed to new developments. They prefer to ignore Christ's coming rather than know Him, to deny it rather than believe in it.[113]

Said incredulity allowed him to denounce the real intention of the Jewish people, which was none other than their anxious wait for the Antichrist, to whose lineage they belonged: "In times of the antichrist, the Synagogue will treat the Church even more mercilessly than how it did during the first coming of the Saviour."[114]

That same Synagogue (related to the Dalilah from the biblical text), corrupted by the devil and seduced by the unrelenting lustfulness of the flesh (*Alleg*. 40, *PL* 83, 108),[115] had refused to accept Christ and for this reason was the culprit that triggered God's abandonment of the Jewish people and their dispersal throughout the gentile nations who had responded affirmatively to the call of the Lord (*De fide* 1.27 and 31; 2.1–13).[116] Keeping in mind the argument from the

111 González Salinero, "Catholic Anti-Judaism," 134; González Salinero, "Un antecedente," 82.

112 See Guglielmo Russino, "*Perfidus* nel latino ecclesiastico," *Pan. Studi dell'Istituto di Filologia Latina dell'Università di Palermo*, 24 (2008), 121.

113 "*Judaei nefaria incredulitate Christum Dei Filium abnegantes, impii, duricordes, prophetis veteribus increduli, novis obstrusi, adventum Christi malunt ignorare, quam nosse; negare, quam credere* [...]," Isidore, *De fide Catholica contra Iudaeos* 1.1.1.

114 "Grauius sub Antichristi temporibus contra Ecclesiam desaeuiet Synagoga, quam in ipso aduentu Saluatoris Christianos est persecuta," Isidore, *Sententiae* 1.25.6. See also Isidore, *Allegoriae*, 93 (PL 83, 113); *Quaestiones in Vetus Testamentum: in librum Iudicum* 6.3 (PL 83, 386–87); Bat-Sheva Albert, "Isidore of Seville: His Attitude towards Judaism and His Impact on Early Medieval Canon Law," *Jewish Quarterly Review* 80 (1990), 212; Cohen, *Living Letters of the Law*, 97; González Salinero, "Catholic Anti-Judaism," 135; Drews, *Juden und Judentum bei Isidor von Sevilla*, 394–97; Fontaine, *Isidoro de Sevilla. Génesis y originalidad*, 183–84.

115 Drews, *Juden und Judentum bei Isidor von Sevilla*, 398 and 405–06.

116 Marie-Louise Thérel, "L'origine du theme de la 'Synagogue repudiée,'" *Scriptorium* 25 (1971), 287; Cohen, *Living Letters of the Law*, 118; Barcala Muñoz, *Biblioteca antijudía*, 360 ff; Raúl González Salinero, "Judíos sin sinagoga en la *Hispania* tardoantigua y visigoda," in

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Ecclesia ex gentibus congregata (*De fide* 2.8),[117] Isidore accepted the Augustinian idea according to which, with the return of Christ and the establishment of the new allegiance, the Jews had no other purpose in the story of salvation than to be a witness to the Christian truth (*De fide* 2.12; *Quaest. in Gen.* 6.16–18, *PL* 83, 226).[118] Following Patristic tradition, Isidore was convinced that the Jews' conversion would only take place, eschatologically, at the end of time (*De fide* 2.4.1; 2.5.1–9; *Quaest. in Gen.* 6.16, *PL* 83, 226).[119] Isidore observed that the Jews continued to maintain their incredulity (*De fide* 2.5.1; 2.6.2) and that their spiritual blindness hindered their capacity to understand the truth and accept the true faith (*De fide* 2.5.4–5).[120]

Similar to the way in which Isidore placed Judaism among the heresies, he placed the Jews, because of their rejection of Christ, at the same level as heretics; in other words, outside the Church of God (*De fide* 2.2.8).[121] Isidore thought that one must not show them mercy (*non est indulgendum eis*) (*De fide* 2.22.1). Forgiveness of sins can only be attained through Catholic baptism (*De fide* 2.24.1–2) and an authentic conversion (*De fide* 2.5.1).[122] The next section examines the extent to which these doctrinal principles guided Isidore as he faced the reality of forced conversions under Sisebut.

5.2 *Praxis: Forced Conversions*

Isidore affirmed in his *Etymologiae* that "during the fourth and fifth year of the most religious ruler Sisebut the Jews in Spain convert to Christianity" (V.39.42),[123]

Marginados sociales y religiosos en la Hispania tardorromana y visigoda, ed. Raúl González Salinero (Madrid: 2013), 206.

117 Díez Merino, "San Isidoro de Sevilla," 85–86.

118 Cohen, *Living Letters of the Law*, 121; Castro Caridad and Peña Fernández, *Isidoro de Sevilla*, 36. According to Paula Fredriksen, "Roman Christianity and the Post-Roman West: The Social Correlates of the *Contra Iudaeos* Tradition," in *Jews, Christians, and the Roman Empire. The Poetics of Power in Late Antiquity*, eds. Natalie B. Dohrmann and Annete Yoshiko Reed (Philadelphia: 2013), 262: "Isidore was intimately familiar with Augustine's writings, which he appropriated freely for his own […] On the topic of the Jews, in brief, Isidore's Augustinianism is selective […] Elsewhere he invokes Augustine's 'witness doctrine' minimally, nowhere quoting Ps 59.12 in his major work *De fide catholica contra Iudaeos* […]."

119 Cohen, *Living Letters of the Law*, 95–96 and 112; González Salinero, *Las conversiones forzosas*, 118; Fontaine, *Isidoro de Sevilla. Génesis y originalidad*, 229; Drews, *The Unknown Neighbour*, 233.

120 Castro Caridad and Peña Fernández, *Isidoro de Sevilla*, 35.

121 See Céline Martin, "Les juifs visigothiques, un peuple hérétique," *Revue de l'Histoire des Religions* 234 (2017), 323–25.

122 Cohen, *Living Letters of the Law*, 119.

123 Isidore, *Etymologiae* 5.39.42: "[Huius quinto et quarto religiosissimi principis Sisebuti] Iudaei [in] Hispania Christiani efficiuntur," trans. Barney et al., 133.

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and, even more explicitly, he adds in his *Historia rerum gothorum suevorum et vandalorum*:

> At the beginning of his reign he [Sisebut] led the Jews to the Christian faith and had indeed an ardent zeal, but not in accordance with wisdom, for he forced them by power when he should have roused them by the doctrine of faith. But, as it is written, "either at a favorable opportunity or by truth Christ should be preached. [cf. Phil. 1:18]."[124]

Years later, during the Fourth Council of Toledo, over which he presided, Isidore stated his opposition to the use of force to compel Jews to convert to Catholicism:[125]

> On the Jews, however, thus did the Holy Synod order, that no one should henceforth be forced to believe [...] such men should not be saved unwillingly but willingly, in order that the procedure of justice should be complete [...] They should be persuaded to convert, therefore, of their own free choice, rather than forced by violence [...] (c. 57).[126]

However, in the second part of this canon the bishops adopted a very different position with respect to the Jews who returned to their religion after having received Catholic baptism:

> [...] Those, however, who were formerly forced to come to Christianity (as was done in the days of the most religious prince Sisebut), since it is clear that they have been associated in the divine sacraments, received the grace of baptism, were anointed with chrism, and partook of the body and blood of the Lord, it is proper that they should be forced to keep the faith even though they had undertaken it under duress, lest the name of

124 "Aera DCL, anno imperii Heraclii II, Sisebutus post Gundemarum regali fastigio euocatur, regnans annis VIII mensibus VI. Qui initio regni Iudaeos ad fidem Christianam permouens aemulationem quidem habuit, sed non secundum scientiam: potestate enim conpulit, quos prouocare fidei ratione oportuit, sed, sicut scriptum est, siue per occasionem siue per ueritatem donec Christus adnuntietur [...]," Isidore, *Historia Gothorum* 60, trans. Guido Donini and Gordon B. Ford, *Isidore of Seville's History of the Goths, Vandals, and Suevi* (Leiden: 1970), 28.

125 Cohen, *Living Letters of the Law*, 104.

126 "De Iudaeis autem hoc praecepit sancta synodus, nemini deinceps ad credendum uim inferre [...] Non enim tales inuiti saluandi sunt, sed uolentes, ut integra sit forma iustitiae [...] Ergo non ui sed libera arbitrii facultate ut conuertantur suadendi sunt, non potius impellendi [...]," IV Toledo, 57, trans. Amnon Linder, *The Jews in the Legal Sources of the Early Middle Ages* (Detroit: 1997), 486.

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> the Lord be blasphemed and the faith they undertaken be treated as vile and contemptible. (c. 57)[127]

José Orlandis asserts that "Theological Realism" meant that forced baptisms had to be considered legitimate; otherwise, their validity would be jeopardized.[128] Besides, rejecting this sacrament was considered perjury, as it was believed to be a betrayal of the solemn oath taken during baptism.[129] Be that as it may, it does not seem that the bishops at the Fourth Council of Toledo were willing to stop forced conversions, whether they went against the civil or canonical code. At least this is the impression obtained from other canons that address the Jewish problem: those Jews who had reverted to their old practices must return to the Christian religion, even if it meant they had to be brought back by force (canon 59); if they are accused of apostasy then they must endure the punishments for this crime (canons 59 and 61); and mixed marriages are forbidden (unless the unfaithful—i.e. Jewish—party converts to Christianity), and the children from such unions must receive Catholic baptism and be educated in the Christian faith (canon 63). Such rulings did not, however, constitute a definitive solution to the Jewish "problem" that confronted the Visigothic church and state.[130]

Even if it is true that Isidore did not think that the method of forced conversion was the most effective means of dealing with the Jews, in no way did he question its results. The truth is that the politics of forced conversions promoted by Sisebut in the 610s draw on the approval and collaboration of Isidore and the ecclesiastical hierarchy of the kingdom.[131] The only extant canon of

127 "Qui autem iam pridem ad Christianitatem uenire coacti sunt, sicut factum est temporibus religiosissimi principis Sisebuti, quia iam constat eos sacramentis diuinis associatos et baptismi gratiam suscepisse et chrismate unctos esse et corporis Domini et sanguinis exstitisse participes, oportet ut fidem etiam quam ui uel necessitate susceperunt, tenere cogantur ne nomen Domini blasphemetur et fidem quam susceperunt uilis ac contemptibilis habeatur," IV Toledo, 57, trans. Linder, 486–87.

128 José Orlandis, "Hacia una mejor comprensión del problema judío en el reino visigodocatólico de España," *Settimane di Studio* 26 (1980), 162–63; Gil Fernández, "Isidoro como obispo," 93. According to Jeremy du Quesnay Adams, "Ideology and the Requirements," 324, the principle of the "sacramental objectivity of baptism" would confer on the act an irreversible character.

129 See Pierre Cazier, "De la coercition à la persuasion. L'attitude d'Isidore de Séville face à la politique anti-juive des souverains visigotiques," in *De l'antijudaïsme antique a l'antisémitisme contemporain*, ed. V. Nikiprowetzky (Lille: 1979), 135; Alexander Pierre Bronisch, *Die Judengesetzgebung im katholischen Westgotenreich von Toledo* (Hannover: 2005), 61–68.

130 González Salinero, *Las conversiones forzosas*, 40 ff.

131 González Salinero, "Catholic Anti-Judaism," 144–45; Cohen, *Living Letters of the Law*, 121; Fredriksen, "Roman Christianity and the Post-Roman West," 262. The edict of forced

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the Third Council of Seville (presided over by Isidore, as we already know) constitutes irrefutable proof of this fact.[132] Indeed, in this decree, bishops forced Jews to baptize their children, denouncing and prohibiting their common practice of substituting other children for their own in the baptismal ceremony[133]:

> We have learnt that certain Jews who have recently been called to the faith of Christ have, in the dishonesty of their perfidy have presented other children in place of their own before the holy, sacred font of baptism in order to wash these, in place of their own children in a further baptism, thus by this hidden and vile pretence they keep their children pagans. Truly they were all from the beginning perjured by their innate perfidy and never of the Faith! It behooves us to be wise to their deceitful schemes and trickery. For if some of the ancient fathers exercised such care concerning those of the Jews who had come to the grace of Christ by their own free will to prove their faith long before they were baptised, how much more should we be concerned about those who are called to the prize of faith not by a genuine conservation of their mind but solely by royal authority? For Sisebut the most loyal of God's servants and most victorious of princes amid all the concerns of his kingdom being mindful of the fathers' sayings that many good things must be set before the unwilling and knowing that he would have to give an account to God for those whom Christ had entrusted to his rule, preferred to lead even the unwilling to the Truth rather than that they persist in their ancient innate perfidy [...] therefore of one accord we have decreed the following against these stubbornly impious souls that in both countryside and towns, both

conversion was even seen as a sign of the "apostolat royal," Céline Martin, "Un prince épiscope. Le ministère royal visigothique," in *Le prince chrétien, de Constantin aux royautés barbares* (*IVe–VIIIe siècle*), eds. S. Destephen, B. Dumézil, and H. Inglebert (Paris: 2018), 260.

132 Alexander Pierre Bronisch, "Convergencias y diferencias entre reyes visigodos y alta clerecía: el ejemplo de la legislación sobre los judíos," *Medievalismo* 26 (2016), 41–43, denies (unconvincingly, in my view) the probative force of this canon.

133 See González Salinero, *Las conversiones forzosas*, 35–36; González Salinero, "Isidoro y los judíos," 201–11; Bruno Dumezil, "Une source méconnue sur la politique de conversions forcées du roi Sisebut: le canon 10 du concile de Séville," in *Juifs et chrétiens, Sources pour la recherche d'une relation permanente*, eds. Flocel Sabaté and Claude Denjean (Lleida: 2006), 21–35; Rachel L. Stocking, "Forced Converts, 'Crypto-Judaism', and Children: Religious Identification in Visigothic Spain," in *Jews in Early Christian Law. Byzantium and the Latin West, 6th-11th Centuries*, eds. John Tolan, Nicholas de Lange, Laurence Foschia, and Capucine Nemo-Pekelman (Turnhout: 2014), 246–47.

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> presbyters and clerks should take care with them lest those of them who have not been baptised disguise their ancient errors.[134]

Isidore did not disapprove of coercive procedures. The use of force was justified when it was used to attain a higher purpose, as in the case of the king having to resort to violence to maintain, at all costs, ecclesiastical discipline (*Sent.* 3.51.5), or as in those other cases when it was necessary to force the people (even employing terror, if it was required) to obey the laws and avoid negative behavior (*Sent.* 3.47.1). It was only a small step from this to justifying forced conversions of the Jews.[135] We must not forget that Isidore does not exclude the role of divine coercion in leading a sinner to salvation:

> God brings fear to men in many ways so that, though tardily, they might convert and so feel all the more shame that their return to Him took so long. At times he alarms some with threats, at times some with blows, at times some with revelations so that those who disdain to convert of their own free will be set aright after being confounded by terror.[136]

The problem of crypto-Judaism convinced Isidore once and for all of the need to use persuasion as the only means to bring the Jews into the Christian

134 "Comperimus quosdam Iudaeos nuper ad fidem Christi uocatos quadam perfidiae fraude alios pro filiis suis ad sacrum sanctum lauacri fontem offerre, ita ut sub specie filiorum quosdam iterato baptismate tingant, sicque occulta ac nefaria simulatione natos suos paganos retinent, uere omnes ab initio naturali et perfidia periurati et nunquam in fide. Contra quorum fraudulentas artes ac subdolas diligenter nos oportet habere sollertiam. Si enim illi antiqui Patres de his qui ex Iudaeis sponte sua ad Christi gratiam ueniebant, tantam sollicitudinis curam gesserunt, ut fides eorum ante baptismum multis temporibus probaretur, quanto magis de his quos non propria mentis conuersio sed sola regalis auctoritas ad fidei praemium prouocabat? Namque fidelissimus Deo Sisebutus ac uictoriosissimus princeps inter cunctas reipublicae suae curas memor Patrum dictis, quam multa bona praestantur inuitis sciens, super Deo se debere rationem de his quos Christus suo deputauit regimini istos etiam nolentes ueritatem perducere quam in uetustate inolitae perfidiae perdurare […] idcirco contra indeuotos et pertinaces animos hoc in commune decernimus, ut siue in parrociis seu in urbibus tam presbyteri quam clerici peruigilem pro eis sollicitudinem gerant, ne qui ex his sine perceptione lauacri in errorem pristinum lateant," III Seville, 10.

135 Bat-Sheva Albert, "Un nouvel examen de la politique anti-juive wisigothique. A propos d'un article récent," *Revue des Études Juives* 135 (1976), 20–21 (for whom the canon 10 of III Seville and 16 of IV Toledo were corroboration).

136 "Multis modis terret Deus homines, ut uel sero conuertantur, atque exinde magis erubescant, quod tandiu exspectati sunt ut redirent. Nam nunc minis, nunc plagis, nunc reuelationibus quosdam concutit, ut qui uoluntate conuerti despiciunt, commoti terroribus corrigantur," Isidore, *Sententiae* 2.7.8.

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faith,[137] even if it stood in direct opposition with his conviction of the inability to defeat, through reason, the hardness and stubbornness of the Jewish people.[138] Finally, it is possible that Pope Gregory the Great's opinion on this matter had influenced Isidore.[139] He believed that reasoning with the Jews to attract them to Christianity was more convenient than using force, since it only resulted in fake conversions, which would carry with them the desire to return to the previous religion and thus lead to even greater harm.[140]

6 Conclusion

When the Visigoths converted to Catholicism in 589 the association between *fides* and *regnum* became permanently sealed. In the same way that the *fides catholica* determined a subject's social and legal status under Visigothic rule, *infidelitas* forbade an individual from belonging to the *regnum Christi*. Isidore used the concept of orthodoxy to delineate the ideological boundaries outside of which the "other" was placed, whether pagan, Byzantine, barbarian, heretic, or Jew. Marginally present in civil society and alienated both politically and religiously, they were all regarded as enemies of a state which had been instituted by divine right. The "other" was outside the parameters within which Isidore of Seville defined the new Visigothic kingdom: a Gothic fatherland, a repository of Roman cultural heritage under the protection of the divine providence and the doctrines of the Catholic Church.

Translated by Geraldine Barandiarán-Muñoz

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137 Albert, "Un nouvel examen," 22; Pierre Cazier, *Isidore de Séville et la naissance de l'Espagne catholique* (Paris: 1994), 260–61.

138 Castro Caridad and Peña Fernández, *Isidoro de Sevilla*, 41. According to these authors, "for the bishop of Seville the conversion of the Jews was a pointless task as guaranteeing Christian orthodoxy inevitably entailed the ostracism of the Jews."

139 Gregory the Great, *Epistulae* 1.34; 1.45; 9.196.

140 González Salinero, "Un antecedente," 70.

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PART 3

Transmission and Reception of Isidore's Work and Thought

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CHAPTER 14

Isidore of Seville's Early Influence and Dissemination (636–711)

Mark Lewis Tizzoni

1 Introduction

Within a few decades of his death, certain of Isidore's works were disseminated rapidly, and knowledge of his life was spread throughout Spain and beyond. This chapter examines the immediate reception of Isidore, from the author's death in 636 to the fall of the Visigothic kingdom to Muslim armies in 711. Isidore's legacy was, at its very start, both human and intellectual: Isidore left behind not only his literary works but his students and followers. His legacy was born not only from his own efforts but from the efforts of the Iberian intellectuals who followed him. These intellectuals, some known to Isidore and others farther removed, received his thought and employed it in their own works, thus serving to transmit his works and reputation rapidly.

Until recently, the study of Isidore's legacy has been largely the purview of Spanish and French scholarship. As is generally the case with Isidorian studies, the work of Jacques Fontaine provides a good starting point. Fontaine provides a brief overview of Isidore's immediate legacy in the epilogue to his *Isidore de Séville: Genèse et originalité de la culture hispanique au temps des Wisigoths* (Turnhout: 2000).[1] A detailed study of Isidore's early legacy is provided in the essays of Angel C. Vega, Manuel C. Díaz y Díaz, and Bernhard Bischoff found in *Isidoriana*, edited by Manuel C. Díaz y Díaz (Leon: 1961).[2] Collectively, the relevant studies in *Isidoriana* lay out and analyse the 7th-century (and later) texts

1 Fontaine addresses many of the same texts covered in the present chapter, albeit in great brevity. His overview of Isidore's legacy in pre-Islamic Iberia covers pages 401–04. Fontaine barely touches upon the subject in his landmark *Isidore de Séville et la culture classique dans l'Espagne wisigothique* (Paris: 1983), 863 sqq. in the context of the "Isidorian Renaissance."

2 These essays are Angel C. Vega, "Cuestiones críticas de las biografías isidorianas," in *Isidoriana*, ed. Manuel C. Díaz y Díaz (León: 1961), 75–98; Manuel C. Díaz y Díaz, "Isidoro en la Edad Media hispana," 345–87 (345–59 cover the early period); Bernhard Bischoff, "Die europäische Verbreitung der Werke Isidors von Sevilla," in Díaz y Díaz, *Isidoriana*, 317–44. As with Fontaine's epilogue, these essays cover the same material with which the present article is concerned.

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involved in the creation of Isidore's legacy alongside their manuscript traditions. More recently, the introductions and commentary accompanying the *Corpus Christianorum* editions of the texts involved in the production and reception of Isidore's legacy provide key studies on the subject.[3] This scholarship synthesizes and establishes a fundamental understanding of these texts and their authors and provides a framework for further study. The field has likewise been furthered with the volume edited by Andrew Fear and Jamie Wood, *Isidore of Seville and his Reception in the Early Middle Ages: Transmitting and Transforming Knowledge* (Amsterdam: 2016). The essays in the volume bring together and analyse decades of advancement in our understanding of these texts and the period and places within which they arose, with Michael J. Kelly's chapter presenting an important re-evaluation of Isidore's early legacy.[4] Building on this work, the goal of this chapter is three-fold. Firstly, it discusses and examines the earliest hagiographical (or historiographical) accounts produced regarding Isidore and his works. The main texts here are the *Obitus beatissimi Isidori Hispalensis episcopi* of Redemptus of Seville, the *Renotatio librorum domini Isidori* of Braulio of Zaragoza, and Ildefonsus of Toledo's entry on Isidore in his *De viris illustribus*. Secondly, it outlines the earliest uses of Isidore in Spain and beyond. This section chronicles in particular the use of Isidore's works and thought by Braulio of Zaragoza (*c*.590–651), Eugenius II of Toledo (*c*.600–57) and the Eighth Council of Toledo in 653, Ildefonsus of Toledo (607–67), and Julian of Toledo (*c*.644–90). Attention is also paid to the earliest use of Isidore in Ireland and Frankish Gaul. Lastly, it examines the earliest manuscript evidence for the circulation of Isidore's writings.

2 The Earliest Hagiographical Accounts

2.1 *Redemptus of Seville,* Obitus beatissimi Isidori Hispalensis episcopi[5]

This text presents itself as an eyewitness account of the final days of Isidore, written by one of his priests, an otherwise unknown Redemptus, shortly after

3 See below for references.

4 Michael J. Kelly, "The Politics of History-Writing: Problematizing the Historiographical Origins of Isidore of Seville in Early Medieval Hispania," in *Isidore of Seville and his Reception in the Early Middle Ages: Transmitting and Transforming Knowledge*, eds. Andrew Fear and Jamie Wood (Amsterdam: 2016), 93–110.

5 For a more detailed discussion of the *Obitus* see Pedro Castillo Maldonado, "La muerte de Isidoro de Sevilla: apuntes de crítica histórico-hagiográfica," *Habis* 32 (2001), 577–96, and

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Isidore's death on 4 April 636. Redemptus wrote to an unnamed abbot or bishop, at their request. There has been a fair amount of speculation regarding the identity of this unnamed addressee.[6] It may well have been written for Isidore's friend Braulio or indeed for Isidore's successor Honoratus, possibly as a starting point for a no-longer-preserved *vita* of Isidore.[7] Regardless, the text was clearly designed to be sent out to the ecclesiastical, and presumably political, hierarchy of Visigothic Iberia, and thence read out to their congregations and retainers. The text represents, in form and effect, a letter, albeit a letter containing hagiographical material and underpinned by similarly hagiographical, as well as historiographical, aims.[8] The text represents an emotional account of Isidore's final days. Specifically, it details his final confession, penitence, and blessing, and the response of his flock. The text begins by laying out the context of Isidore's final days: he worked tirelessly for the poor, and, having grown weakened by recurring illnesses, he foresaw his approaching death and summoned two suffragan bishops for his final confession. Isidore then, Redemptus tells us, began receiving into his little cell (*cellula*) great crowds (*tanta agmina*) of the faithful of Seville, representative of all the differing groups of society.[9] Isidore then moved himself to near an altar in the basilica and donned the symbols of penitence.[10]

At this point, surrounded by his people and so arrayed, Isidore began his impassioned and heartfelt confession. Redemptus presents Isidore's first speech: Isidore proclaims himself an unworthy sinner and asks God for forgiveness.[11] Having made this confession to God, he received communion from the aforementioned bishops and then addressed the crowd.[12] Where his first speech was a prayer to God, his second speech was a prayer to his people: he

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Gerd Kampers, "Exemplarisches Sterben. Der 'Obitus Beatissimi Hispalensis Isidori episcopi,' Klerikers Redemptus," in *Nomen et Fraternitas. Festschrift für Dieter Geuenich zum 65 Geburtstag*, eds. Uwe Ludwig and Thomas Schilp (Berlin: 2008), 235–48.

6 See, e.g., José Carlos Martín, "Redempto de Sevilla," in *La Hispania visigótica y mozárabe: dos épocas en su literatura*, eds. Carmen Codoñer and Maria Adelaida Andrés Sanz (Salamanca: 2010), 185–86, and Castillo Maldonado, "La muerte," 584–85. See also José Carlos Martín, ed., *Scripta de uita Isidori Hispalensis episcopi*, CCSL 113B (Turnhout: 2006), 280–84.

7 Martín, "Redempto," 185–86.

8 Historiographical in the view of Kelly, "Politics of History-Writing," 96–98. See also Castillo Maldonado, "La muerte," 585, in terms of genre (the hagiographical letter).

9 Redemptus of Seville, *Obitus* 2.

10 Namely, a goatskin garment and ashes, provided by his suffragans. Redemptus of Seville, *Obitus* 3. Isidore describes the symbolism of this at *De ecclesiasticis officiis* 2.17.4–5. The same action is found, for example, in the *Vitas Sanctorum Patrum Emeritensium* 4.8.

11 Redemptus of Seville, *Obitus* 3.

12 Redemptus of Seville, *Obitus* 4.

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humbly asked for their intercession on his behalf alongside forgiveness for all the wrongs which he may have done to them.[13] This speech, Redemptus tells us, was met with great tears and prayers for the remission of the congregation's own sins, accompanied by their forgiveness of all of Isidore's own debts and promises (*uincula uel cirografa*).[14] Isidore then gives one final address to those assembled, admonishing them to love one another and to live a Christian life.[15] Having completed his confession, Isidore commanded that surplus money be distributed to the poor, and stated his desire to exchange a final greeting and bestow a final blessing on all individually.[16] The text concludes with the assembled crowd leading Isidore back to his cell and, after the fourth day of penitence and confession, Isidore "accomplished an end to his continual pastoral care in peace."[17]

This text represents an important step in the creation of Isidore's legacy. Redemptus strives throughout to present Isidore as a living saint humbly approaching the end of his earthly life. This letter, which on the surface is merely an account of Isidore's last days, functions in precisely the same fashion as contemporary hagiography. Isidore sees his death coming, calmly prepares for it, says his goodbyes and prays for forgiveness, and finally meets it peacefully. The issue of central importance for Redemptus in this text is not the *death* of Isidore, which appears at the very end almost as an afterthought, but rather the fashion in which Isidore meets it. Redemptus presents Isidore as the saintly pastor, concerned with, and engaged in, the care of his flock to the very end. At both the beginning and end of the text we witness Isidore ministering to the poor and destitute, who are likewise present throughout the text. Isidore's people—not only the clergy and the poor with whom he works daily, but also the rank and file townspeople—love him. The text emphasizes this devotion on both sides. His people weep for and with him, and when he asks for their forgiveness, they respond by giving it, and by asking him to reciprocate. Crucial also is the fact that Isidore foresees his own death: this especially links the *Obitus* with the genre of hagiography.[18] Redemptus is not here showing us

13 Redemptus of Seville, *Obitus* 4.

14 Redemptus of Seville, *Obitus* 4.

15 Redemptus of Seville, *Obitus* 4. Specifically, Isidore tells them not to return evil for evil, not to gossip, not to let the devil find any evil within them, nor to be greedy, but that they be snatched safely away from evil.

16 Redemptus of Seville, *Obitus* 5.

17 Redemptus of Seville, *Obitus* 6. The full conclusion reads: "Conpletis his omnibus ad cellulam reductus est, et post diem confessionis vel poenitentiae quartum, pastoralem iugiter curam finem suum consummavit in pace. Amen."

18 The same, e.g., is found in Braulio of Zaragoza's *Vita Sancti Aemiliani* 32 and in the *Vitas Sanctorum Patrum Emeritensium*.

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Isidore the scholar or Isidore the theologian, but Isidore the confessor, Isidore the saint.

Such is the legacy Redemptus set out to create. Redemptus's text is a production of Isidore's close circle in Seville and shows the bishopric's interest in representing Isidore's legacy. The presentation of their great bishop as a saint, and not as a scholar, can be seen as an effort to reinforce the authority of the see: Isidore had already increased Seville's authority significantly during his life as a known scholar and theologian (in addition to his role as tutor and friend to the king); it now remained to cement that authority by elevating Isidore to sainthood.

2.2 *Braulio of Zaragoza,* Renotatio librorum domini Isidori[19]

The most important single figure for the construction of Isidore's legacy was Braulio of Zaragoza. [20] It was he whom Isidore chose to edit his great *Etymologiae*, and he who, when the time came, wrote the *Renotatio* in memory of his teacher. The text is short and something of an obituary, written shortly after the death of its subject.[21] As the title suggests, it presents the reader with a catalogue of Isidore's published works. This catalogue, however, is combined with Braulio's eulogy for his teacher and friend, set as bookends to the list. Braulio appended the text as an additional entry at the end of Isidore's *De viris illustribus*.[22] This act served to concretize Isidore's place as a *vir illustris* and allowed Braulio to shape his image and legacy fundamentally.

Braulio begins with a short biographical notice presenting the necessary basic information: he names Isidore, describing him as an "extraordinary man", a *uir egregius*, as bishop of Seville and brother and successor to Leander, who flourished in the time of Emperor Maurice and King Reccared. Very quickly, however, Braulio moves on to Isidore's achievements, and this first notice represents, in essence, Isidore's professional biography. Braulio writes:

19 For a parallel discussion of the *Renotatio* in view of Isidore's *De viris illustribus*, see Kelly, "The Politics of History-Writing," 96–98.

20 Braulio was born between 585–594/595 and died in 651. For biography, see Charles H. Lynch, *Saint Braulio, Bishop of Saragossa (631–651): His Life and Writings* (Washington, DC: 1938). For a shorter but more recent treatment, including a very useful bibliography, see José Carlos Martín, "Braulio de Zaragoza," in Andrés Sanz and Codoñer, *La Hispania visigótica y mozárabe*, 95–100.

21 Martín, *Scripta*, 51.

22 The manuscript tradition for the *Renotatio* is connected to that of Isidore's *De viris illustribus* (as well as with Ildefonsus's continuation). A detailed and comprehensive examination of the manuscript tradition can be found in Martín, *Scripta*, 92–179.

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> In him antiquity gained some new fame for itself, or rather our age saw in him an image of antiquity, for he was a man well trained in every kind of locution, so that the quality of his words made him adaptable for one who was learned and for one who had no knowledge, famous both for suiting his words to his subject and for his incomparable eloquence. It can now be very easy for any prudent reader to judge how great his knowledge was from his varied interests and carefully written works.[23]

After this comes the catalogue. Braulio's list includes seventeen titles, in an order that was logical to the author—perhaps in chronological order of composition, perhaps not.[24] A concise descriptive entry accompanies each title. The *Differentiae*, the first title listed, is described as "[making] subtle distinctions between the meanings of words which are commonly confused in practice."[25] This succinct description serves as an exemplar of Braulio's treatment of the first sixteen titles. The catalogue provides the reader with a usable, informative, and convenient reference list for Isidore's works.[26] For the *Etymologiae*, however, the final item on the list, Braulio provides a larger and more detailed entry. This entry serves to link the two authors, but it also showcases the *magnum opus* of a great thinker. Braulio writes:

> A manuscript of *Etymologies*, of extremely large size, set off by him by subject matter rather than in books; because he wrote it at my request,

23 "In quo quiddam sibi antiquitas vindicavit, immo nostrum tempus antiquitatis in eo scientiam imaginauit. Vir in omni loquutionis genere formatus, ut inperito doctoque secundum qualitatem sermonis existeret aptus, congrua uero opportunitate loci incomparabili eloquentia clarus. Iam vero quantus sapientia fuerit, ex eius diuresis studiis et elaborates opusculis perfacile prudens lector intelligere poterit," Braulio, *Renotatio*, trans. Claude W. Barlow, *Iberian Fathers, Volume 2: Braulio of Saragossa, Fructuosus of Braga* (Washington, DC: 1969), 140.

24 The titles, in Braulio's order, are: the *Differentiae*, the *Prooemii*, the *De ortu et obitu Patrum*, the *De ecclesiasticis officiis*, the *Synonyma*, the *De natura rerum*, the *De numeris*, the *De nominibus Legis et Euangeliorum*, the *De haeresibus*, the *Sententiae*, his *Chronica maiora*, the *Contra Iudaeos*, his *De uiris illustribus*, his monastic *Regula*, the *Historia de regibus Gothorum, Vandalorum et Sueuorum*, the *Quaestiones*, and the *Etymologiae*. As for whether this order is indeed chronological, for the debate in brief see Kelly, "Politics of History-Writing," 96 ff (in his chapter in the present volume, Graham Barrett offers a different interpretation). For a more detailed discussion, see José Carlos Martín, *La 'Renotatio Librorum Domini Isidori' de Braulio de Zaragoza* (Logroño: 2002), 74–84.

25 "Edidit enim libros Differentiarum duos, in quibus subtili discretione ea quae confuse usu proferuntur sensu discrevit," Braulio, *Renotatio*, trans. Barlow, 140.

26 Convenient, provided the reader found themselves in possession of a copy of the *De uiris illustribus* with the *Renotatio* attached.

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> I divided it into fifteen books, although he left it unfinished. This work is suitable to every branch of philosophy; whoever reads and meditates upon it frequently will have and deserve a reputation for knowledge of divine and human affairs. It is packed with elegant statements of many kinds, collected in concise manner; from it, there is practically nothing that cannot be learned.[27]

This entry on the *Etymologiae* has a very different tone than the other entries in the catalogue and both provides a glowing "review" of the work and serves to connect the description of the text to the first part of Braulio's eulogy. Braulio presents the text as the great encyclopaedia, as the summation of knowledge and model of language, which, at the time, it certainly was. He also presents the *Etymologiae* as the greatest accomplishment of Isidore the scholar, not only his last work, but his most important.

The final section of the *Renotatio* sums up the achievements of Isidore. Braulio begins with a sentence that has caused a great deal of scholarly debate by casually referencing a number of other, smaller works by Isidore, although the current general consensus limits the authentic works of Isidore to the seventeen specifically listed.[28] Braulio proceeds to praise Isidore with the words of Cicero regarding Varro:

> As we journeyed and wandered like strangers in our own city your books have, as it were, brought us home, so that we may occasionally know who and where we are. You have revealed the history of our fatherland, the revelations of all time, the sacred laws, the laws of the priests, public and private discipline, the names, kinds, functions, and origins of sees, regions, places, and all things divine and human.[29]

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27 "Etymologiarum codicem nimiae magnitudinis distinctum ab eo titulis, non libris, quem, quia rogatu meo fecit, quamuis inperfectum ipse reliquerit, ego in viginti libros divisi. Quod opus omnimodo philosophiae conveniens quisquis crebra meditatione perlegerit, non ignotus divinarum humanarumque rerum scientia merito erit. Ibi redundans diversarum atrium elegantia, quaecumque fere scire debenture restricta collegit," Braulio, *Renotatio*, trans. Barlow, 142. Barlow reads *quindecim* (fifteen) based on Galindo's reading in C.H. Lynch and P. Galindo, *San Braulio, Obispo de Zaragoza* (*631–635*)*, Su Vida y sus Obras* (Madrid: 1950), whereas Martín, *Scripta*, reads *viginti* (twenty).

28 See for example, Lynch, *Saint Braulio*, 216.

29 "Nos, inquit, in nostra urbe peregrinantes errantesque tanquam hospites tui libri quasi domum reduxerunt, ut possimus aliquando qui et ubi essemus agnoscere. Tu aetatem patriae, tu descriptions temporum, tu sacrorum iura, tu sacerdotum, to domesticam publicamque disciplinam, tu sedium, regionum, locorum, tu omnium diuinarum humanarumque rerum nomina, genera, officia, causas aperuisti," trans. Barlow, 142.

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Following this Ciceronian adulation, Braulio praises Isidore in his own words.[30] Braulio chooses to emphasize Isidore's work in quelling the heresy of the Acephali in the Second Council of Seville (held in 619, describing his words against them as a "flood of eloquence", a *flumen eloquentiae*). After placing Isidore's death in the reigns of the Emperor Heraclius and King Chintila, Braulio gives one final description of his mentor: "of all people he was more outstanding in terms of sound teaching and more prolific in the works of charity."[31]

For a short and relatively unpretentious text, the *Renotatio* is very informative. Firstly, Braulio possessed precise knowledge of Isidore's works and likely held in his library a substantial body of his mentor's texts.[32] The *Renotatio* itself was attached to (and ultimately transmitted with) Isidore's *De viris illustribus*, which suggests that Braulio expected *both* texts to be circulated and read. Braulio certainly speaks of the texts, especially the *Etymologiae*, as works that are available to him. The text itself indicates an expectation, at least on Braulio's part, that his readers would be able to access these works.

Principally, however, the text represents Braulio's conscious effort at constructing a positive memory of Isidore and, as such, bears witness both to how Braulio himself viewed his mentor and how he wished others to view him. Indeed, the image that Braulio creates is a crucial one, as he, more than anyone else, was responsible for shaping Isidore's early legacy.[33] Braulio constructs an image of Isidore as a great and prolific scholar. Alongside this stands the glowing description of the *Etymologiae* as the font of all knowledge and, in a more understated way, the simple and plain descriptions of each of Isidore's works and why they are essential for various fields of knowledge. In many ways, the *Renotatio* represents an academic's obituary. It highlights the matters that were important to scholars like Isidore and Braulio. Most prominently, Braulio presents the reader with Isidore's publication record and promotes him as an accomplished and influential thinker whose works are of benefit to all, not only to the educated elite. In so doing, he outlines Isidore's immense contributions to the field of knowledge. Braulio also draws attention to Isidore's role in

30 The quote is not generally considered to have been derived directly from the text of Cicero, *Academica* 1.3, but rather from Augustine, *De ciuitate Dei* 6.2. See Barlow, *Iberian Fathers, Volume 2*, 10; Díaz y Díaz, "Isidoro in la Edad Media hispana," 248; Lynch, *Saint Braulio*, 218–19.

31 "Sana doctrina praestantior cunctis et copiosior operibus caritatis," Braulio, *Renotatio*.

32 We know from his letters that Braulio sought out, and received, manuscripts from Isidore, Lynch, *Saint Braulio*, 149.

33 A discussion of this can be found in Díaz y Díaz, "Isidoro en la Edad Media hispana," 346–50, at 347: "Es Braulio, sin embargo, quien inicia una nueva etapa en la consideración y veneración a Isidoro."

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condemning the Acephali, presenting him as an accomplished theologian. Yet, the *Renotatio* is not solely concerned with the legacy of Isidore the scholar: the reader must note that the text's final statement, its final emphasis, focuses upon Isidore the holy man, Isidore the saint. Braulio ends the text by stating that Isidore "was more generous than all in the works of charity" ("cunctis et copiosior operibus caritatis"). This parallels Redemptus's text directly and helps to lay the groundwork for Isidore's veneration as a saint, separate from his scholarly achievements. Braulio effectively sets up the two-fold cult of St Isidore: on the one side stands Isidore the *uir egregius*, eloquent and learned, and on the other side Isidore the Saint, dedicated to acts of charity.

2.3 *Ildefonsus of Toledo, Regarding Isidore of Seville in the* De viris illustribus[34]

The third and final in the series of early accounts of Isidore is by Ildefonsus of Toledo in his continuation of Isidore's *De viris illustribus*.[35] Unlike the works of Redemptus and Braulio, Ildefonsus's *De viris illustribus* is slightly more remote, dating from some point during his tenure as bishop of Toledo (657–67).[36] Unlike the previous two authors, Ildefonsus was not a member of Isidore's direct circle. Rather, he was solidly rooted in the ecclesiastical context of Toledo. Prior to replacing his mentor, Eugenius II, as metropolitan of Toledo, Ildefonsus served as abbot of the monastery of Agali, located outside Toledo.[37] Ildefonsus's continuation of the *De viris illustribus* departs substantially from previous versions of the *De viris illustribus* tradition in several important ways.[38]

34 For a parallel discussion, see Kelly, "The Politics of History-Writing," 101–03.

35 Isidore's *De viris illustribus* is itself a continuation of those of Jerome and Gennadius.

36 A thorough discussion (along with the text) can be found in Valeriano Yarza Urquiola and Carmen Codoñer, eds., *Ildefonsi Toletani episcopi opera*, CCSL 114A (Turnhout: 2007), 475–617. See also A.T. Fear, trans., *Lives of the Visigothic Fathers* (Liverpool: 1997), xxxiii-xxxvi. The text was written some point after the death of Eugenius II of Toledo in 657, whose substantial entry is found at the end of the text. The text is, of course, a continuation of Isidore's own.

37 As abbot, Ildefonsus was a signatory of VIII Toledo, discussed below.

38 The Christian tradition of the *De viris illustribus* begins with Jerome (d. 420), whose text (written in 392) sought to establish a Christian intellectual tradition that could stand up against pagan criticisms. In essence, Jerome's *De viris illustribus* creates a universal biographical-bibliographical record of the achievements of Christian authors, albeit one selected/controlled by the author himself. Gennadius of Marseille (died *c.*496) continued Jerome's text, if with a somewhat more thematic and Gallic-provincial focus. Isidore's text (written 615–18) sought to fill a perceived gap in the coverage, namely, he sought to give Hispania its place in the canon of Christian letters. For the tradition, as outlined here, Jamie Wood, "Playing the Fame Game: Bibliography, Celebrity, and Primacy in Late Antique Spain," *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 20 (2012), 613–40. For the development of the late

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Ildefonsus's work is far narrower than that of his predecessors, focused not so much even upon the Iberian church but upon that of Toledo, and further shifting the focus from specifically men of letters to bishops, whether prominent authors or not.[39] The biographical entries occur in chronological order, and, although relatively brief, Isidore's entry, the eighth, is among the longer ones. Ildefonsus split his account of Isidore's life into roughly two parts: the first provides a brief biography of Isidore, and the second a short catalogue of his works. The text resembles on the surface Braulio's *Renotatio*, a logical approach, given their placement in the *De viris illustribus* tradition, yet its treatment of Isidore is decidedly different.[40]

Ildefonsus's biography of Isidore begins with his succession to the bishopric of Seville following the death of his brother Leander. Ildefonsus describes Isidore as such:

> A man distinguished both by his looks and intellect. His ability in speaking reached such a pitch of fluency and delight that his wondrous richness of expression left his audience enraptured to such a degree that a man who had heard him would not remember what he had said unless it was repeated many times. He wrote famous works and no small number of them [...].[41]

Following this description, Ildefonsus provides a summary of Isidore's works. The list is decidedly less well organized and is shorter than Braulio's, and largely lacks the descriptions found in the *Renotatio*. Ildefonsus details, in order, the

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antique tradition of the *De viris illustribus*, see the survey of Eustaquio Sánchez Salor, "El género de los *de viris illustribus* de Jerónimo a Ildefonso de Toledo: su finalidad," *Talia dixit* 1 (2006), 29–54.

39 The shift between Ildefonsus and Isidore, and between the Iberian tradition and that of Jerome and Gennadius, has been the subject of substantial scholarship. Key to this change is a shift in genre: away from bibliography, towards biography or hagiography (or historiography). Key to this debate are Pedro Juan Galán Sánchez, "El De viris illustribus de Ildefonso de Toledo o la modificación del género," *Anuario de estudios filológicos* 15 (1992), 69–80; Jacques Fontaine, "El *De uiris illustribus* de San Ildefonso de Toledo: tradición y originalidad," *Anales Toledanos* 3 (1971), 79–96; Wood, "Playing the Fame Game," 621–22 and 628–37; and Kelly, "Politics of History-Writing," 101–03; see also Díaz y Díaz, "Isidoro en la Edad Media hispana," 353–54.

40 Kelly, "Politics of History-Writing," 101–03.

41 "Vir decore simul et ingenio pollens, nam tantae iucunditatis adfluentem copiam in eloquendo promeruit, ut ubertas admiranda dicendi ex eo in stuporem verteret audientes, ex quo audita is qui audisset, nonnisi repetita saepius, commendaret. Scripsit opera et eximia et non parva [...]," Ildefonsus of Toledo, *De viris illustribus*, trans. Fear, *Lives of the Visigothic Fathers*, 116.

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De ecclesiasticis officiis, the *Prooemia*, the *De ortu et obitu Patrum*, the *Synonyma*, the *De fide catholica contra Iudaeos*, the *De natura rerum*, the *Differentiae*, the *Sententiae*, the *Quaestiones*, and the *Etymologiae*.[42] Ildefonsus draws particular attention to Braulio's role in instigating the writing of the *Etymologiae*, and describes it as an unfinished text that Isidore worked on until the day of his death. Following this list, Ildefonsus gives a brief note of the Visigothic kings during whose reigns Isidore lived. He ends the text by referring to Isidore as "an outstanding glory and ornament of the Holy Faith."[43]

The tone of Ildefonsus's short account of Isidore and his life and works is markedly different from that adopted by Redemptus and Braulio. Certainly, Ildefonsus pays deference to Isidore and his intellectual abilities, but Ildefonsus's compliments almost appear as a criticism: Isidore was so eloquent and well spoken that no one knew what he was saying.[44] The fact that Ildefonsus fails to provide the full list of Isidore's works is also telling, particularly when one pays attention to the omissions. Ildefonsus cuts Isidore's historical and mystical writings alongside his monastic rule and, in so doing, presents his reader with a very different version of Isidore the author.[45] Isidore's *De viris illustribus* finds itself swept under the rug by Ildefonsus: a particularly pointed omission, considering that Ildefonsus references it (as an essentially faulty work) in the preface to his own *De viris illustribus*.[46] The distinctly positive light in which both the *Obitus* and the *Renotatio* portrayed Isidore is absent in the *De viris illustribus*: indeed, one scholar has gone so far as to describe

42 Ildefonsus fails to mention the *De numeris*, the *De nominibus Legis et Euangeliorum*, the *De haeresibus*, his *Chronica*, his *De viris illustribus*, his *Monastica regula*, and the *De origine Gothorum et regno Suevorum et etiam Vandalorum Historia*.

43 "Doctrinae sanctae gloriam pariter et decorem," Ildefonsus of Toledo, *De viris illustribus*, trans. Fear, *Lives of the Visigothic Fathers*, 117.

44 This backhanded compliment is not the only way Ildefonsus cuts down Isidore at the same time that he is building him up. As Wood, "Playing the Fame Game," 637, has pointed out, Ildefonsus depicts Isidore as "an old-style illustrious man in a list that was written to redefine what it meant to be illustrious." He also cuts out most of Braulio's praise for Isidore, see Kelly, "Politics of History-Writing," 101.

45 Fear, *Lives of the Visigothic Fathers*, xxxv-xxxvi, attributes the failure to mention the *Historia Gothorum* to a desire to protect Isidore in light of the controversy surrounding King Suinthila. Kelly, "Politics of History-Writing," 101, sees this in light of Ildefonsus's attempts to strengthen the position of Toledo within the text. Kelly, "Politics of History-Writing," 102, likewise associates the omission of Isidore's *Regula* with Ildefonsus's efforts to privilege the monastery at Agali, which employed the rule of the African Donatus, who was included in Ildefonsus's *De viris illustribus*.

46 In light of this omission, in a useful examination of the text, Kelly, "Politics of History-Writing," 101–03, frames Ildefonsus's *De viris illustribus* as a response to both Isidore's *De viris illustribus* and Braulio's *Renotatio*.

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Ildefonsus's portrayal of Isidore as a "treacherous attack."[47] The principal reason for this decidedly less positive treatment of Isidore appears to stem from Ildefonsus's position as metropolitan of Toledo in a time when Toledo was attempting to assert dominance over the church in Iberia.[48] Isidore lent great prestige to the see of Seville, a prestige promoted by the works of Redemptus and Braulio. Seville possessed a long-seated ecclesiastical and intellectual prominence, whereas Toledo was principally the city of the Visigothic kings. In his *De viris illustribus*, Ildefonsus was attempting to assert the intellectual and ecclesiastical dominance of Toledo over Seville. Through his abbreviated list of Isidore's works, as Kelly has pointed out, Ildefonsus essentially strips Isidore of his role as the "grand architect of consensus and unity", as he has come to be seen, in order that he can shift this role onto the bishops of Toledo.[49] Thus, Ildefonsus played down the legacy of Isidore and championed that of his own Toledan forebears.[50]

3 Citations of and References to Isidore in Iberian Writings of the Later 7th Century

The Iberian authors in the generation following the death of Isidore did not create a single legacy for their illustrious predecessor. Rather, these first-generation accounts formed a divided and competing historiographical legacy for Isidore.[51] Yet, Isidore's works also spoke for themselves and helped to ensure his intellectual dominance. Even in their disparity, the earliest hagiographical/historiographical accounts laid the foundations for the cult of Isidore and his legacy as both scholar and saint. Collectively, they paint a positive picture of Isidore and they furnish us with something of an "official

47 Díaz y Díaz, "Isidoro en la Edad Media hispana," 354, with a full discussion of Ildefonsus and Isidore's legacy at 352–54.

48 This effort, which began under Eugenius II, to reorient the Visigothic church towards Toledo spanned several decades in the mid-7th century. Partly this was done through church councils, but there was also a literary element. Eugenius II's poetry served to co-opt Isidore's intellectual might into a Toledan-centred cultural and educational programme ultimately brought to full realization by Julian of Toledo (bishop from 680 to 690). For the growing ecclesiastical dominance of Toledo, see Peter Linehan, *History and the Historians of Medieval Spain* (Oxford: 1993), 54–56, and Roger Collins, *Visigothic Spain: 409–711* (Oxford: 2006), 83. For Eugenius II's use of Isidore in this regard, see: Mark Lewis Tizzoni, "(De-)Constructing the Visigothic Poet: Religious, Cultural, & Regional Identity in Eugenius II of Toledo," *Visigothic Symposia* 2 (2017), 155–75.

49 Kelly, "Politics of History-Writing," 101 ff.

50 See Wood, "Playing the Fame Game," 628–37, and Díaz y Díaz, "Isidoro en la Edad Media hispana," 353–54.

51 Kelly, "Politics of History-Writing," 93.

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version" of how he was to be represented, a framework for contextualizing how he was viewed in later 7th-century Iberia. Yet they do not present the full scope of his early legacy and reception. For that, we must look at how his successors in the Visigothic kingdom employed his texts within their own.

4 Braulio of Zaragoza (*c.*590–651)

In the *Renotatio*, we see Isidore depicted as both a saint dedicated to works of charity and the greatest scholar of his age, whose works paved the path towards knowledge and understanding. This depiction is central to Braulio's construction of Isidore's legacy. We know from both the *Renotatio* and from their correspondence that Braulio was familiar with the works of Isidore. These texts, however, do not provide the entire picture.

Aside from the direct correspondence between the two bishops, we find reference to Isidore of Seville in three of Braulio's letters. Letter 14, addressed to the priest Fronimian (to whom Braulio likewise addressed his *Vita Sancti Aemiliani*), presents Isidore as an authority on matters of liturgical practice. The second reference is in letter 22, addressed to a Bishop Eutropius, regarding the dating of Easter. Isidore appears here as the last in a list of authorities on the subject in question.[52] Braulio refers to Isidore as "the distinguished man of our time."[53] Once again, Isidore is described in glowing terms, this time as a *vir insignis*. The third reference comes in letter 44, addressed to Bishop Fructuosus of Braga, who had posed Braulio several questions. Having thoroughly answered the question regarding the timing of the death of Methuselah with references to Jerome and Augustine, Braulio proceeded to quote Isidore's *Etymologiae* as well. Once again, Isidore is glowingly described, this time as a "man of incomparable knowledge."[54] Braulio thus employs Isidore as his ultimate authority on a consistent basis.

5 Eugenius II of Toledo (*c.*600–57)

Eugenius II of Toledo, Braulio's student, was very different in terms of his use of Isidore's works. Unlike his predecessors, Eugenius's literary efforts were

52 Isidore, *Etymologiae* 6.17.5–9.

53 "Nostri temporis vir insignis," Braulio, *Epistola* 22.

54 "Incomparabilis scientiae vir," Braulio, *Epistola* 44. The Isidorian citation here is actually rather gratuitous: the *Etymologiae* passage is somewhat off-topic and the Jerome text cited had directly answered the question at hand.

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principally poetic, and his verse shows clearly the influence of Isidore.[55] Eugenius possessed a firm knowledge of Isidore's works.[56] He appears to have held a particular affection for the *Etymologiae*, as a number of his original poems versify various pieces of information drawn directly from this text. Eugenius's poetic corpus contains over sixty points of parallel with Isidore's works, with a little over forty stemming from the *Etymologiae*.[57]

The majority of Eugenius's "Isidorian poems" are straightforward versifications of snippets from the natural history sections of the *Etymologiae*. These are principally located in the collection of distichs on natural history found between *carmen* 42 and 64 in Eugenius's corpus.[58] *Carmen* 62, *De adamante*, provides a representative example of how Eugenius employed Isidore's works. While Eugenius' poem does not directly cite the *Etymologiae*, it does contain information directly obtained from it, namely, the use of goat blood to soften the otherwise unbreakable rock adamant (and the non-typical spelling of the word *adamas* as *adamans*).[59] Eugenius's poem contains the same information as the passage from Isidore, it merely distils it into a short two lines of verse. This is Eugenius's general approach in the "Isidorian" distichs, which cover topics ranging from ornithology to geology. Eugenius's use of Isidore was not, however, restricted to these short informational versifications, as the poet also employed Isidore's works as reference for several of his longer poems. *Carmen* 39, *De inventoribus litterarum*, is another example of Eugenius's distillation of Isidore's vast reservoir of information into brief verses. This poem condenses several sentences from the *Etymologiae*, and some from the *Historia Gothorum*, into six lines of verse listing the various inventors of the alphabets known at the time.[60] These two poems demonstrate Eugenius's use of Isidore as an encyclopaedia, much as prescribed by Braulio.

55 Discussions of Eugenius's use of Isidore can be found in Díaz y Díaz, "Isidoro en la Edad Media hispana," 350–51, and Mark Lewis Tizzoni, *The Poems of Dracontius in their Vandalic and Visigothic Contexts* (PhD dissertation, University of Leeds, 2012), 238 and 246–47, and Tizzoni, "(De-)constructing." Eugenius wrote works other than poetry, but, apart from his letters, none of his other writings have survived.

56 Eugenius was, at the very least, familiar with the *Differentiae*, the *Synonyma*, the *De natura rerum*, the *Sententiae*, his *Chronica*, his *De uiris illustribus*, the *Historia de regibus Gothorum, Vandalorum et Sueuorum*, and the *Etymologiae*. For a comprehensive list of *loci similes* with Isidore's texts, see the *index fontium* in Paulo Farmhouse Alberto, ed., *Eugenii Toletani Opera Omnia*, CCSL 114 (Turnhout: 2005), 425–26.

57 Isidore, in fact, represents one of Eugenius's most used sources for his poetry.

58 Eugenius, *carmina* 42–52 (excluding *carmen* 49) and *carmina* 59–64 are drawn from Isidore.

59 See Isidore, *Etymologiae* 16.13.2. Eugenius and Isidore both employ the non-typical spelling.

60 While Eugenius reordered the list and cut out some the names, his information clearly parallels that given by Isidore. It could be argued, of course, that Eugenius was using

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It is with this use of Isidore as a font of knowledge that we first see Eugenius's role in the creation of Isidore's legacy, as well as glimpse an important part of his early reception. Firstly, it demonstrates that, by the time Eugenius was writing these poems, Isidore was viewed as an authority and his *Etymologiae* as a reference for all things "scientific." Secondly, it shows the strength of his influence on one of the most important metropolitans of Toledo: an influence that his successor Ildefonsus strove unsuccessfully to curb. The most striking aspect of Eugenius's usage of Isidore, however, comes when one considers that these poems were likely to have been used as classroom exercises.[61] This means not only that Isidore was seen as a fundamental source of knowledge, but that young students, whether in Zaragoza or Toledo (or both), were being exposed to, and engaging with, Isidore's texts.[62] This educational use represents a much wider and deeper exposure to Isidore than is represented simply by his peers and their successors, such as Redemptus, Braulio, and Ildefonsus. Isidore was being presented in the classroom, information derived ultimately from his works was being taught to future monks, clerics, and laymen, to anyone in attendance at the episcopal school in Toledo or the monastic school in Zaragoza. This use of his intellectual output hints at the potential extent of Isidore's influence and reception on the ground, and shows how his legacy may have spread to future generations in Visigothic Iberia.

6 The Eighth Council of Toledo, 653

Eugenius's role in the transmission of Isidore's legacy was not limited to his poetic works. As metropolitan of Toledo, he presided alongside King

Isidore's sources, rather than Isidore himself, but the sheer volume of Isidorian resonances, coupled with Eugenius's position as Braulio's student and intellectual successor, are highly suggestive.

61 Considerable evidence exists to indicate that these poems were written by Eugenius to be used as teaching aids in class, and this is the position of the present author. It can also be asserted that these were exercises drawn up by Eugenius as a student in Zaragoza (the more typical assertion). Considering that he became metropolitan of Toledo in 647, and the *Etymologiae* only came into Braulio's possession in the 630s (by which time Eugenius was already Braulio's archdeacon), it is most likely that his primary and rhetorical education was completed by the time of the text's publication. Whichever the case, the text belonged in the classroom, and the implications for Isidore's legacy and reception remain the same.

62 See the chapters by Graham Barrett and Pedro Castillo Maldonado in the present volume for more on Isidore and education in Visigothic Iberia.

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Recceswinth (r. 649–72) over the Eighth Council of Toledo. This council represented another important point in the creation of Isidore's legacy.[63] The council covered a range of topics, but the matter of central concern for the purpose of the current chapter is its direct reference to Isidore and how his memory is employed in the council records.[64]

The first of these matters is straightforward: in the discussion regarding the treatment of *refugi* and *perfidi*, exiles/expatriates and traitors, found in the second canon, Isidore's *Sententiae* and *Synonyma* are used to provide an authoritative theological proof.[65] The canon quoted both texts directly and cited them by name. The canon presents Isidore as the final proof, following Augustine of Hippo and Gregory the Great, and so, as the final authority, his words carry more weight. That VIII Toledo should afford Isidore the status of chief authority, even over Augustine and Gregory, shows the power of Isidore's legacy in 653.

This level of intellectual and theological authority is underscored by the language in which Isidore is described. The records of the council state:

> The extraordinary doctor (*doctor egregius*) of our century, the most recent/utmost honor of the universal church, the most recent in an age of excelling people, not the lowest in the formation of doctrine; and what is more, at the limit of the present ages he is the most learned.[66]

Here, we witness the elevation of Isidore from Braulio's *vir egregius* to *doctor egregius* by Braulio's student Eugenius. For the bishops of Iberia, united together in council with the highest nobility of the Peninsula, Isidore was a teacher from whom all could learn, and the utmost authority available to them. The efforts of Isidore's earliest hagiographers had borne fruit.

63 As Kelly, "Politics of History-Writing," 98, points out, VIII Toledo contains the first official recognition of Isidore's intellectual authority by the Toledan power structure.

64 Parallel treatments to what follows can be found in Kelly, "Politics of History-Writing," 98–100, and in Díaz y Díaz, "Isidoro en la Edad Media hispana," 351–52.

65 VIII Toledo 2, ed. José Vives, *Concilios visigóticos e hispano-romanos* (Barcelona: 1963), 276–77. The wider context is Recceswinth's approach to the rebellion of Froia. See Kelly, "Politics of History-Writing," 99–100.

66 "Nostri quoque seculi doctor egregius, ecclesiae catholicae novissimum decus, praecedentibus aetate prostremus, doctrinae conparatione non infimus, et quod maius est in seculorum fine doctissimus […]," VIII Toledo 2 (in translating I have taken *prostremus* as *postremus*).

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7 Ildefonsus of Toledo (607–67)

Despite the rather underwhelming praise given to Isidore by Ildefonsus in his *De viris illustribus*, Ildefonsus was nevertheless familiar with, and indebted to, the works of his Sevillian predecessor. The most obvious evidence of this is the simple fact that Ildefonsus, regardless of his motivations, chose to write a continuation of (or response to) Isidore's own continuation of the *De viris illustribus* and included, as we have seen, Isidore himself. In the preface, he describes Isidore as a *vir prudentissimus*, a most sensible (or skilled) man. The reference to Isidore in the *De viris illustribus*, however, pales in comparison to his influence on Ildefonsus's other works.

Indeed, Ildefonsus's three main theological works—the *De virginitate Sanctae Mariae*, his most famous work, which asserts the perpetual virginity of Mary; the *De cognitione baptismi*, a doctrinal treatise on baptism; and the *De itenere deserti*, a treatise on the Christian life—all bear a substantial debt to the collected works of Isidore.[67] All three texts are replete with parallels to Isidore's works, but the most heavily employed are the *De ecclesiasticis officiis*, the *Etymologiae*, and the *De fide catholica contra Iudaeos*. In terms of source material, the *De cognitione baptismi* is particularly indebted to the *De ecclesiasticis officiis*, as the *De virginitate* is to the *De fide catholica contra Iudaeos*. The *De virginitate* provides a good example of the extent to which Ildefonsus employed the works of Isidore. Firstly, Ildefonsus wrote the text in a synonymic fashion following Isidore's *Synonyma*. Inside this Isidorian structure, Ildefonsus constructed his arguments using evidence drawn directly from Jerome, and especially from Isidore.[68] The preface to the text contains certain, if not overt, parallels with the *Synonyma* which become more pronounced as it progresses.[69] Indeed, of the sixty-two chapters of the *De fide catholica contra Iudaeos* in the Migne edition, Ildefonsus employs thirty-two in writing his *De virginitate*.[70]

67 Thorough summations of Ildefonsus's use of sources, including of Isidore, are given, by book, in Yarza Urquiola and Codoñer, *Ildefonsi Toletani episcopi opera*, 73–85, 318–30, and 549–53 (for the *De viris illustribus*). See also the detailed *index fontium* at the end of the same volume. See also Díaz y Díaz, "Isidoro en la Edad Media hispana," 352–54. For more substantial glosses on these texts see José Carlos Martín, "Ildefonso de Toledo," in Andrés Sanz and Codoñer, *La Hispania visigótica y mozárabe*, 131–34.

68 See, again, the *index fontium* in Yarza Urquiola and Codoñer, *Ildefonsi Toletani episcopi opera*, and also Martín, "Ildefonso," 131–32.

69 Yarza Urquiola and Codoñer, *Ildefonsi Toletani episcopi opera*, 73–74.

70 Yarza Urquiola and Codoñer, *Ildefonsi Toletani episcopi opera*, 74. The *De cognitione baptismi* and the *De itenere deserti* are likewise indebted, see 318–30.

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Isidore's profound influence on Ildefonsus, the foremost theologian of the last decades of the Visigothic kingdom, demonstrates the extent of his influence on 7th-century Iberian thought. Ildefonsus nevertheless fails to cite Isidore by name (we must remember, of course, Ildefonsus's loyalty to the see of Toledo, mentioned earlier).[71] He may not give credit to Isidore, but it was no longer possible, nor was it desirable, to ignore him.

8 Other Iberian Sources[72]

Isidore's early legacy hardly confined itself to these authors. The *Lex Visigothorum*, for example, bears the marks of Isidore's *Sententiae*, and the *Vitas Sanctorum Patrum Emeritensum* made use of the *Synonyma*.[73] Fructuosus of Braga (died *c*.665), working in north-western Iberia, heavily employed the works of Isidore, especially his monastic *regula*, when writing his own monastic rules.[74] Indeed, Isidore even features in the *Vita Sancti Fructuosi*, written sometime after the bishop of Braga's death by an unnamed disciple of his.[75] Taio of Zaragoza, another student of Braulio, was likewise part of this ever-growing Isidorian "school."[76]

Julian of Toledo was another writer strongly influenced by Isidore. Metropolitan of Toledo from 680 to 690, he, like his predecessors, was the product of a markedly Isidorian intellectual training. Like Ildefonsus, Julian was both abbot of Agali and a student of Eugenius II.[77] In his theological works Julian employed the writings of Isidore alongside those of Augustine and Gregory the Great. Like Ildefonsus, he also failed to cite Isidore as a source.[78] More pertinent

71 Díaz y Díaz, "Isidoro en la Edad Media hispana," 352–54 (who accuses Ildefonsus of plagiarism). We must also remember that at the time, it was not beyond the bounds of normal practice to do this, and we should perhaps not read overly much into it.

72 For a parallel discussion with additional references, see Kelly, "The Politics of History-Writing," 103–06.

73 Fontaine, *Isidore de Séville: Genèse et originalité*, 403.

74 Fontaine, *Isidore de Séville: Genèse et originalité*, 404. Fructuosus was bishop of Braga and the founder of the monastery of Compludo; he also corresponded with Braulio, who sent him books.

75 Kelly, "The Politics of History-Writing," 103. For the text, see Manuel C. Díaz y Díaz, ed., *La Vida de San Fructuoso de Braga* (Braga: 1974).

76 Díaz y Díaz, "Isidoro en la Edad Media hispana," 355, and Fontaine, *Isidore de Séville: Genèse et originalité*, 404.

77 Julian refers to Eugenius II as his teacher (*praeceptor*) twice in his *Prognosticon futuri saeculi* 3.17 and 3.24.

78 Díaz y Díaz, "Isidoro en la Edad Media hispana," 354 (with bibliography); Fontaine, *Isidore de Séville: Genèse et originalité*, 404; J.N. Hillgarth, ed., *Sancti Iuliani Toletanae Sedis*

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still is the mention of Isidore in the records of the Fifteenth Council of Toledo, which Julian presided over as primate in 688.[79] Once more, Isidore, whose legacy was by this point so established that he did not even need to be properly named, is the *doctor egregius*, cited as a key authority alongside Augustine, Ambrose, and Athanasius.[80]

9 The Earliest Use of Isidore in Non-Iberian Sources

9.1 *The Earliest Irish Evidence*[81]

Outside Visigothic Iberia, Ireland represents one of the earliest traceable avenues for the reception of Isidore's work. Scholars, notably J.N. Hillgarth, have argued that Ireland was connected very early on to the intellectual world of the Iberian Peninsula and North Africa.[82] Recently, the earliest links have been called into serious question.[83] While doubt lingers regarding most of the 7th century, by its final decade/s Isidore's writings had arrived in Ireland and from that point rose to prominence.[84] The *Etymologiae* represent the most widely used of Isidore's writings in Irish contexts at the end of the 7th and opening of the 8th century, but there was also knowledge of other texts, including the *De*

Episcopi Opera, CCSL 115 (Turnhout: 1976), xvi-xviii. Julian used Isidore for his *Prognosticon futuri saeculi*, his *Liber Anticimen*, and his *Ars grammatica*. Again, Julian should be seen as continuing the Toledan consolidation undertaken by his predecessors.

79 This council, in many ways, was an assertion of the theological strength of the Iberian church.

80 XV Toledo 5, ed. Vives, *Concilios visigóticos*, 462, where Isidore is referred to simply as: "doctor egregius Spalensis sedis episcopus." For further discussion, see Díaz y Díaz, "Isidoro en la Edad Media hispana," 352.

81 For a recent and more detailed examination of the earliest Irish reception of Isidore, see Marina Smyth, "Isidorian Texts in Seventh-Century Ireland," in Fear and Wood, *Isidore of Seville and his Reception in the Early Middle Ages*, 111–30. See also Martin J. Ryan's chapter in the present volume.

82 J.N. Hillgarth, "Visigothic Spain and Early Christian Ireland," in *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy* 62.C.6 (1962), 172. See, also J.N. Hillgarth, "Ireland and Spain in the Seventh Century," in *Peritia* 3 (1984), 1–16; Michael Herren, "On the Earliest Irish Acquaintance with Isidore of Seville," in *Visigothic Spain: New Approaches*, ed. Edward James (Oxford, 1980), 243–50.

83 Marina Smyth, "Isidorian Texts," 112–14. This early evidence stemmed in part from links between Lathcen MacBaith's *Egloga de Moralibus in Iob*, dated *c.*650–61, and Isidore's *De ortu et obitu Patrum*: these links, it is argued, result from a Carolingian interpolation. Smyth provides substantial bibliography.

84 Smyth, "Isidorian Texts," 125–26.

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natura rerum and the *Differentiae*.[85] As Hillgarth states of Ireland: "nowhere else, outside of Isidore's own Spain, can one find anything approaching either the range of works used or the range of writers using them."[86] It may only be that this is truer of the early-8th century than of the mid-7th century.

9.2 *The Earliest Frankish Evidence*[87]

While the evidence for Isidore's early legacy in Gaul is scant compared to Ireland and Iberia, knowledge of his work arrived there before the end of the 7th century. Most of the Frankish evidence revolves around a single Isidorian text, the *Chronica*. Isidore was known to Defensor of Ligugé (working around 700), Theofrid, abbot of Corbie (d. after 683), and the writer of the late-7th-century *Vita Wandregesili*.[88] Perhaps the most important piece of early Frankish evidence, however, comes from the Fredegar Chronicle.

Originating at some point in the latter half of the 7th century, the Fredegar Chronicle, albeit a multi-layered and somewhat problematic text, provides some of the earliest evidence for Isidore's use outside of Iberia.[89] The principal Isidorian text in question when discussing the Fredegar Chronicle is Isidore's own *Chronica*. The text's manuscript tradition is complicated, but Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, lat. 10910, dating from the late-7th to the early-8th century, is of particular importance in discussing the legacy of Isidore.[90]

85 Hillgarth, "Early Christian Ireland," 186–87; Hillgarth, "Ireland and Spain," 8. See also Herren, "On the Earliest Irish Acquaintance," 243–50.

86 Hillgarth, "Ireland and Spain," 9.

87 For later Frankish evidence, see Sinéad O'Sullivan's chapter in the present volume. See also Melissa Markauskas, "Rylands MS Latin 12: A Carolingian Example of Isidore's Reception into the Patristic Canon," in Fear and Wood, *Isidore of Seville and his Reception in the Early Middle Ages*, 177–207; and Laura Carlson, "Adoption, Adaptation, & Authority: The Use of Isidore in the Opus Caroli," in Fear and Wood, *Isidore of Seville and his Reception in the Early Middle Ages*, 209–30.

88 Hillgarth, "Early Christian Ireland," 182; Hillgarth, "Ireland and Spain," 7.

89 The oldest version of the chronicle dates to *c*.660. For this date, see Roger Collins, *Die Fredegar-Chroniken* (Hanover: 2007), 105–07. For studies of the Fredegar Chronicle alongside text and translation, see Olivier Devillers and Jean Meyers, *Frédégaire: Chronique des temps mérovingiens* (Turnhout: 2001) and J.M. Wallace-Hadrill, *The Fourth Book of the Chronicle of Fredegar* (Westport: 1981). For an important recent study, including the manuscript tradition, see Helmut Reimitz, *History, Frankish Identity and the Framing of Western Ethnicity, 550–850* (Cambridge: 2015), 166–239. In light of the recent work on Isidore in Ireland, the Fredegar Chronicle may well represent the first evidence for Isidore's use outside of Iberia.

90 Wallace-Hadrill, *The Fourth Book of the Chronicle of Fredegar*, xlvii. For this manuscript and especially the placement of Isidore's writing within it, see also Walter Goffart, "The Fredegar Problem Reconsidered," *Speculum* 38 (1963), 206–41.

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Indeed, the earliest manuscript history of the Fredegar Chronicle matches that of Isidore's *Chronica* in Frankish Gaul—Paris BnF lat. 10910 contains both Isidore's *Chronica* and the earliest version of the Fredegar Chronicle, although this is the only manuscript of the Fredegar Chronicle to do so.[91]

In the prologue to part four of Paris BnF lat. 10910, representing the actual "chronicle of Fredegar", the chronicler writes that he or she carefully reviewed (*dilientissime percurrens*) the chronicle of Isidore, along with a number of other chronicles.[92] The first book of the codex, largely following the *Liber generationis* of Hippolytus of Rome, contains, in Paris BnF lat. 10910, chapter three of Isidore's chronicle.[93] More significantly, at the end of book four in this codex one finds a transcription of Isidore's *Chronica* with an *explicit* dated to the fortieth year of the reign of Clothar II (623–24).[94] The relationship between the *Chronica* and Fredegar, whether the *Chronica* was original to the codex, or when it may have been added, is intensely debated by scholars.[95] If the Isidorian material is original, and it was indeed written around 660, it bears witness to a relatively swift transmission of the *Chronica* into Frankish territory. If we are to trust the date given at the end of Isidore's chronicle in Paris BnF lat. 10910, then the text was likely present in Gaul during the lifetime of Isidore, a rapid transmission indeed. If the *Chronica*'s inclusion in the manuscript is a later addition by a scribe, it nevertheless shows that Isidore's work was present in Gaul in the 7th century, suggesting that elements of it had arrived and been copied soon after their composition.[96] In addition to the presence of Isidore's *Chronica* both as part of the text and as an appendix to it, the Fredegar Chronicle also makes use, at one point, of the *Etymologiae*. This usage comes, once more, from the prologue to part four where the Fredegar chronicler defines the

91 Reimitz, *History*, 220–22.

92 Folio 124v. There has been much debate over the authorship of this work, but the current consensus favours a single compiler, conveniently, if not accurately, referred to as Fredegar: see Goffart, "The Fredegar Problem," 209–16, alongside Collins, *Die Fredegar-Chroniken*, 46–55.

93 Devillers and Meyers, *Frédégaire*, 7–9; Goffart, "The Fredegar Problem," 209–16.

94 Devillers and Meyers, *Frédégaire*, 8–10. Isidore's *Chronica maiora* exists in two redactions, the earlier dating to Sisebut's reign (in 615/616) and the second to that of Suinthila's (in 626); see, with references, Sam Koon and Jamie Wood, "The *Chronica Maiora* of Isidore of Seville," *e-Spania* 6 (2008).

95 Devillers and Meyers, *Frédégaire*, 8–10. The fact that Isidore's *Chronica* appears in no other manuscripts of Fredegar lends support to scholars who suggest that the addition of Isidore's *Chronica* stemmed not from the compiler of Fredegar's chronicle but rather the scribe of Paris BnF lat. 10910, see Reimitz, *History*, 221–22.

96 The latest plausible date put forward for Paris 10910 is 714: even accepting this date, and whether the internal dating is credible (or not), it is clear that Isidore's text existed in Gaul by the beginning of the 8th century.

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word *chronica* with the definition provided by Isidore at *Etymologiae*, 5.28. Taken together, these references demonstrate that, even if the *Chronica* was merely appended to the manuscript at a later date, the original version of the Fredegar Chronicle, composed in 7th-century Gaul, referenced, took into consideration, and used as an authority, the work of Isidore of Seville.

10 7th-Century Manuscript Evidence for the Circulation of Isidore's Writings

As we have seen, 7th-century Visigothic, Frankish, and Irish literature all bear witness to the early transmission of Isidore's works, even during his own lifetime. Much of the manuscript evidence is later and less clear, although it helps to paint a picture of Isidore's early influence and dissemination.[97] Perhaps the most important manuscript for this discussion is Sankt Gallen, Stiftsbibliothek, 226, a papyrus codex originating in the latter half of the 7th century within a continental Irish context.[98] This codex contains an abridged copy of Isidore's *Synonyma* and bears witness to knowledge of this text north of the Pyrenees. Also important is the late 7th- or early 8th-century Paris BnF lat. 10910, which, as discussed above, transmits a portion of Isidore's *Chronica.* Another relevant manuscript is Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, lat. 6400G, a three-part codex which contains Isidore's *De natura rerum*, written in 7th- to 8th-century uncial (part two of the codex), and *De ecclesiasticis officiis*, written in an 8th-century uncial argued to be of northern Gallic origin (part three of the codex).[99] These very early manuscripts all point to the presence of a selection of Isidore's works in Gaul (or more precisely in the network of Irish monasteries in Gaul and beyond) by the close of the 7th century. While few in number, the 7th-century manuscripts serve to complete the picture painted by

97 The most in-depth studies of Isidore's manuscript traditions are to be found in the CCSL editions of his works cited in the bibliography. Another important work, detailing the subject as it was in 1961 is Bischoff, "Die europäische Verbreitung der Werke Isidors von Sevilla," 317–44.

98 Jacques Elfassi, ed., *Isidori Hispalensis Episcopi Synonyma*, CCSL 111B (Turnhout: 2009), xxix-xxxv (with bibliography), and also Bischoff, "Die europäische Verbreitung," 323, where it is numbered as 227. Both of these sources place the text in the south of France (Elfassi suggests Lyon). Hillgarth, "Early Christian Ireland," 184, on the other hand, places the text initially in Ireland, with transmission to Bobbio possibly in the 9th century.

99 Christopher M. Lawson, ed., *Sancti Isidori Episcopi Hispalensis De ecclesiasticis officiis*, CCSL 113 (Turnhout: 1989), 208, and Bischoff, "Die europäische Verbreitung," 324. Hillgarth, "Early Christian Ireland," 185, places the manuscript at Fleury.

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the literary sources. Evidence from the 8th century is much more extensive. [100] The 8th century provides us with numerous surviving manuscripts from Italy and Gaul and displays, above all else, the importance of the Irish in the development of Isidore's legacy.[101]

11 Conclusion

The impact that Isidore had upon the intellectual culture of the Latin West in his own century was both profound and pervasive. His thought dominated the world of later-7th-century Iberia, his works pervaded everything from basic instruction in the classroom to the highest affairs of church and state. His students, and their students, used his work to forge a powerful Visigothic-era theological tradition. Even those, like Ildefonsus and Julian, who sought to assert Toledo's authority over Seville, and thus over an important element of Isidore's legacy, could not avoid saturating their own writings with his. His works possessed such utility and fame that they were quickly transmitted both to Ireland and to Gaul, possibly even before his death. He was received universally as an authority of high standing: in Iberia, at the very least, he was placed alongside and sometimes even above Augustine, Jerome, and Gregory the Great.

This legacy was built with care. A priest of Seville, Redemptus, recorded his last days, presenting him as truly a saint, worthy, through his care, devotion, and humility, of the rewards of Heaven. His student, Braulio, likewise presented his beloved teacher as a saint, given always to works of charity. Yet, like Isidore, Braulio was himself a theologian and a scholar, and so he depicted his teacher in this light too. Isidore's scholarly reputation was established early, and this is how Ildefonsus chose to portray him, however begrudgingly. These early biographies of Isidore, combined with inexorably increasing knowledge of his works and their usefulness, served to build for Isidore a bipartite saint's cult—on one side stood Isidore, devoted to charity, caretaker of the poor, and champion of orthodoxy, and on the other stood Isidore the scholar, *doctor egregius*, the greatest authority of the early medieval Iberian Peninsula.

100 Bischoff, "Die europäische Verbreitung," 320–36.

101 The 8th-century manuscripts are too numerous for detailed mention here, and the author would direct any interested parties to the CCSL editions of Isidore's works, the Bischoff article, and the two Hillgarth articles cited above.

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CHAPTER 15

Isidore amongst the Islands: The Reception and Use of Isidore of Seville in Britain and Ireland in the Early Middle Ages

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1 Introduction[1]

In the garden of Llanllyr House in what is now Ceredigion, Wales, stands an early medieval inscribed stone—much abused and now missing its left-hand side. Despite this damage, the inscription can still be made out:

> TESQUITUS DITOC MADOMNUAC OCCON FILIUS ASAITGEN DEDIT[2]

In other words, the stone records the gift of the *tesquitus* of Ditoc that Occon, son of Asaitgen, gave to Madomnuac (or Modomnoc, as he appears in other sources). What is meant by *tesquitus* is more difficult to discern: Nash-Williams suggested "waste-plot"; more recently, Handley offered "hermitage" or "monastery." For our purposes, the meaning of the word matters less than its source: *tesquitus* was coined from *tesqua*—an obscure word, known only in Britain through Isidore's *Etymologiae*.

The Llanllyr inscription with its link to Isidore is both remarkable and unsurprising. Remarkable, because the evidence for Latin learning and religious

1 This piece has been improved greatly by the input of numerous individuals—I thank particularly Jamie Wood, Andy Fear, Nick Higham, Rosa Vidal Doval, and Elena Carrera, as well as audiences in Manchester (Instituto Cervantes) and London (Medieval Hispanic Research Seminar, QMUL). The errors and infelicities remain my own. All references to the *Etymologiae* are taken from Wallace M. Lindsay, ed., *Isidori Hispalensis episcopi Etymologiarum sive originum libri XX*, 2 vols (Oxford: 1911) and translations of it from Stephen A. Barney, W.J. Lewis, J.A. Beach, and Oliver Berghof, *The* Etymologies *of Isidore of Seville* (Cambridge: 2006). Where another work draws on the *Etymologiae*, I have based my translation on that of Barney et al.

2 For this and what follows, Mark A. Handley, "Isidore of Seville and 'Hisperic Latin' in early Medieval Wales: The epigraphic culture of Llanllyr and Llanddewi-brefi," in *Roman, Runes, and Ogham: Medieval Inscriptions in the Insular World and on the Continent*, eds. John Higgit, Katherine Forsyth, and David N. Parsons (Donington: 2001), 26–36.

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culture in Wales in this period is meagre even by early-medieval standards.[3] Unsurprising, for the works of Isidore were central to learning in Britain and Ireland in this period: they were studied, copied, epitomised, expanded, glossed, even fabricated. For the Irish, Isidore's *Etymologiae* were the *Culmen*, the summit, the highest peak of learning.[4] Some of the earliest manuscripts of Isidore's writings come from an Irish cultural milieu; so, too, do some of the earliest Isidorian pseudepigrapha—back-handed, but a compliment nonetheless. Readers in the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms were just as enthusiastic. At the archiepiscopal school at Canterbury, the *Etymologiae* were the lecturer's crib of choice, guiding not just how texts ought to be understood but also how they should be read and taught. In the north, Isidore's impact was equally great. On his deathbed, the Northumbrian monk the Venerable Bede devoted his attention to two texts; the first was the Gospel of John, the second was Isidore's *De natura rerum*.

This chapter offers an introduction to the reception and influence of Isidore's writings in Britain and Ireland in the pre-Viking period, that is, to roughly 750. To keep things manageable, the focus will be on Latin texts—though this should not be understood as implying that Isidore's impact on vernacular literature was negligible or unimportant. Likewise, the surviving evidence means that this work will concentrate on Ireland and the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms—though as the Llanllyr stone shows, Isidore's appeal reached further.

2 Isidore in Ireland

The central place of the Irish in the early reception of Isidore's writings has long been acknowledged. In the second decade of the 20th century, Beeson noted that Isidore was known in Ireland (and England, too) very early, while more recently McNally, Bischoff, and, above all, Hillgarth have championed the Irish as especially early adopters.[5] Though Beeson knew of no early Irish copies

3 For surveys, see Michael Lapidge, "Latin Learning in Dark Ages Wales: Some Prolegomena," in *Proceedings of the Seventh International Congress of Celtic Studies*, eds. D. Ellis Evans, John G. Griffith, and E.M. Jope (Oxford: 1985), 91–107, and Thomas Charles-Edwards, *Wales and the Britons, 350–1064* (Oxford: 2013), 625–50.

4 Tomás Ó Máille, "The Authorship of the *Culmen*," *Ériu* 9 (1921), 71–76.

5 Charles H. Beeson, *Isidor-Studien* (Munich: 1913), 129, Robert E. McNally, "Isidorian Pseudepigrapha in the Early Middle Ages," in *Isidoriana*, ed. Manuel C. Díaz y Díaz (León: 1961), 306, Bernard Bischoff, "Die europäische Verbreitung der Werke Isidors von Sevilla," in Díaz y Díaz, *Isidoriana*, 328–29, J.N. Hillgarth, "Ireland and Spain in the Seventh Century," in *Visigothic*

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of Isidore's works, important discoveries were made subsequently. Most significant was the identification of fragments from Book XI.i of the *Etymologiae* in what is now St Gallen Stiftsbibliothek 1399 a 1. These fragments date to the middle decades of the 7th century—Bischoff even suggested to Isidore's own lifetime—and were written in an Insular hand, most likely in Ireland itself; they remain the earliest manuscript witness to the *Etymologiae*.[6] A slightly later set of fragments—parts of Books 6 and 7—preserved as the flyleaves of Longleat House, Marquess of Bath, NMR 10589, are likewise the product of an Irish scribe, again, probably working in Ireland.[7]

Herren has written that in the second half of the 7th century Ireland witnessed "a kind of 'Isidorian revolution of knowledge.'"[8] This revolution was but one part of a wider flourishing of scholarly and artistic endeavour over the course of the 7th to 9th centuries—an intellectual "Golden Age" in Ireland.[9] The causes were multiple, but two areas can be highlighted. The first was the importation of new or previously unavailable works into Ireland. Chief among these were the works of classical grammarians, such as Charisius, Diomedes, and Pompeius—many of which likely came by way of Irish foundations on the

Spain, Byzantium, and the Irish (London: 1985), 1. For dissenting voices, see Henry Mayr-Harting, *The Coming of Christianity to Anglo-Saxon England*, 3rd ed. (University Park: 1991), 127–28, and Edward James, "Ireland and Western Gaul in the Merovingian Period," in *Ireland and Early Medieval Europe: Studies in Memory of Kathleen Hughes*, eds. Dorothy Whitelock, Rosamond McKitterick, and David N. Dumville (Cambridge: 1982), 363.

6 Alban Dold and Johannes Duft, *Die älteste irische Handschriften-Reliquie der Stiftsbibliothek St Gallen mit Texten aus Isidors Etymologien* (Beuron: 1955), and for production in Ireland itself, Bischoff, "Die europäische Verbreitung," 327. Claudia Di Sciacca, *Finding the Right Words: Isidore's* Synonyma *in Anglo-Saxon England* (Toronto: 2008), 59, reports assertions that "the parchment of the fragments is continental," but Bischoff had already rejected the use of parchment rather than vellum as diagnostic of origin in this period, see "Die europäische Verbreitung," 327, and his comments in J.N. Hillgarth, "Visigothic Spain and Early Christian Ireland," in *Visigothic Spain*, 183 n. 78.

7 James P. Carley and Ann Dooley, "An Early Irish Fragment of Isidore of Seville's *Etymologiae*," in *The Archaeology and History of Glastonbury Abbey: Essays in Honour of the Ninetieth Birthday of C A. Ralegh Radford*, eds. Lesley Abrams and James P. Carley (Woodbridge: 1991), 144 for date and 149 for origin. For further comment, Marina Smyth, "Isidorian Texts in Seventh-Century Ireland," in *Isidore of Seville and his Reception in the Early Middle Ages: Transmitting and Transforming Knowledge*, eds. Andrew Fear and Jamie Wood (Amsterdam: 2016), 118–19.

8 Michael W. Herren, "The Authorship, Date of Composition, and the Provenance of the So-Called 'Lorica Gildae,'" *Ériu* 24 (1973), 45.

9 See in general, Dáibhí Ó Cróinín, *Early Medieval Ireland, 400–1200* (Harlow: 1995), 196–232, and, more briefly, Martin J. Ryan, "Latin Learning and Christian Art," in *A Companion to the Early Middle Ages: Britain and Ireland c. 500–c.1100*, ed. Pauline Stafford (Oxford: 2009), 178–82.

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Continent, such as Bobbio.[10] Material also arrived from Spain, whether directly or via intermediaries. As well as works by Isidore and a number of his near-contemporaries, such as Julian of Toledo, this included an important and influential computistical collection that reached Ireland by the 630s.[11] The second factor was the various controversies that engulfed the churches in Ireland in the 7th century—uppermost among these being the Paschal Controversy. As Ó Corráin observed, these controversies "forced the churchmen to give deep thought to themselves and their institutions [... They] led to a rapid—one might say urgent—cultivation of a higher learning."[12]

That an "Isidorian revolution" took place in Ireland in the 7th century is indisputable. What remains contested is when this revolution truly began. The problem is two-fold. Firstly, many of the works that draw on Isidore's writings are difficult to date precisely; that some exist in different versions and recensions only adds to the complexities. Secondly, it is not always clear whether a particular author is drawing on Isidore directly or via intermediaries, such as glossaries or word-lists. The surviving manuscripts demonstrate that parts at least of the *Etymologiae* were circulating in Ireland by the mid-7th century, and it is equally clear that a range of Isidore's writings were being drawn on by that century's end[13]; more difficult to ascertain is what was going on in the interim.

It is emblematic that the earliest use of Isidore in Ireland is likely by an author to whom the adjective "enigmatic" is invariably attached: Virgilius Maro Grammaticus.[14] Almost everything about him remains obscure, from his own origins to the purpose of his writings.[15] For a long time, Virgilius was believed to have been from Gaul, perhaps Toulouse; now he is held widely, but not universally, to have been Irish or at least to have been active in Ireland.[16] His two

10 Louis Holtz, "Irish Grammarians and the Continent in the Seventh Century," in *Columbanus and Merovingian Monasticism*, eds. H.B. Clark and Mary Brennan (Oxford: 1981), 146.

11 For the computistical material, Charles W. Jones, ed., *Bedae Opera de Temporibus* (Cambridge, Mass.: 1943), 105; for near-contemporaries, Hillgarth, "Ireland and Spain," 11.

12 Donnchadh Ó Corráin, "The Historical and Cultural Background of the Book of Kells," in *The Book of Kells*, ed. Felicity O'Mahony (Dublin: 1994), 17.

13 In addition to the texts explored below, see Immo Warntjes's chapter on the computistical material in this volume.

14 Michael W. Herren, "On the Earliest Irish Acquaintance with Isidore of Seville," in *Latin Letters in Early Christian Ireland* (Aldershot: 1996), 244–50.

15 For a summary of research, see Michael W. Herren, "Some New Light on the Life of Virgilius Maro Grammaticus," in *Latin Letters*, 27–71.

16 Bernhard Bischoff, "Eine verschollene Einteilung der Wissenschaften," *Archives d'histoire doctrinale et littéraire du Moyen Age* 25 (1958), 20, Herren, "Some New Light," Damian Bracken, "Virgil the Grammarian and Bede: A Preliminary Study," *Anglo-Saxon England* 35

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works—the *Epitomae* and the *Epistolae*—look on the surface to be conventional grammatical treatises, very much in the tradition of commentaries on Donatus and other classical grammarians.[17] Yet Virgilius's writings go far beyond the subject matter of traditional grammars and abound in bizarre vocabulary, puns and word-play, curious etymologies, and the concatenation of fictional—and often outlandishly named—authorities. Virgilius's discussions are interspersed with asides and digressions—most famously his account of the fourteen-day argument between Terrentius and Galbungus over the vocative of "ego"[18]—and he seems to delight in obscure, arcane, and probably personally invented knowledge. What Virgilius was up to has occasioned considerable debate. Were his works elaborate parodies and extended in-jokes?[19] Were they a call for a multiplicity of views and independence of thought at a time when intellectual horizons were narrowing?[20] Or were they simply the work of a teacher attempting to liven up a potentially dull and difficult subject—"like teaching Latin in a pub," as Ó Cróinín put it?[21]

The sheer creative exuberance of Virgilius's writings makes it difficult to trace sources and influences—direct verbal dependencies are almost entirely absent, and debts can be heavily disguised.[22] Despite this, there is a sustained, albeit implicit, engagement with Isidore. Like Isidore, Virgilius showed a particular interest in etymology, believing the origin of words to be a key to their meaning and a route to a deeper understanding. Although Virgilius employed his own methodologies, some of his etymologies look to be derived from or responding to Isidore.[23]

(2006), 7. For doubts, see Vivien Law, *The Insular Latin Grammarians* (Woodbridge: 1982), 49–51, and Giovanni Polara, "Virgilio Marone e la parodia delle dottrine grammaticali," in *L'héritage des grammairiens latins de l'antiquité aux lumières*, ed. Irène Rosier (Louvain: 1988), 118–19.

17 Law, *The Insular Latin Grammarians*, 42–45; Vivien Law, *Wisdom, Authority, and Grammar in the Seventh Century: Decoding Virgilius Maro Grammaticus* (Cambridge: 1995), 5–7, and Rory Naismith, "Antiquity, Authority, and Religion in the *Epitomae* and *Epistolae* of Virgilius Maro Grammaticus," *Peritia* 20 (2008), 59–60.

18 Translated in Law, *Wisdom, Authority, and Grammar*, 109–11.

19 Paul Lehmann, *Die Parodie im Mittelalter* (Munich: 1922), 22, and Polara, "Virgilio Marone."

20 Law, *Wisdom, Authority, and Grammar*, 107–08.

21 Dáibhí Ó Cróinín, "Hiberno-Latin Literature to 1169," in *A New History of Ireland: 1, Prehistoric and Early Ireland*, ed. Dáibhí Ó Cróinín (Oxford: 2005), 389.

22 Polara, "Virgilio Marone," 110.

23 The debt to Isidore was first identified by Thomas Stangl, *Virgiliana. Die grammatischen Schriften des Galliers Virgilius Maro* (Munich: 1891), 128 n. 16. These findings were then expanded by Max Manitius, *Geschichte der lateinischen Literatur des Mittelalters* (Munich: 1911), 1:121.

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> Virgilius Maro Grammaticus, *Epitoma* 11: "Sea" is thought by Latin speakers to derive from bitterness, by Hebrew speakers it is called "gathering of waters."[24]

> Isidore, *Etymologiae* 13.14.1: A sea is a general gathering of waters, for every confluence of waters, whether they are salt or fresh, is, loosely, a "sea" [...] But strictly speaking something is called sea because its waters are bitter.[25]

Taken individually, the similarities between Isidore and Virgilius are suggestive but not compelling.[26] However, as Herren notes, "many of the etymologies of [Virgilius] have parallels in *specific* parts of *specific* books of Isidore [...] the parallels are not random."[27] Yet for Virgilius, Isidore was neither a definitive source nor an indisputable authority. Though never mentioned by name, Isidore was an author to be engaged with and to be challenged; perhaps, as Polara has suggested, he was even an author to be parodied. For example, in book 5.31.1 of the *Etymologiae*, Isidore defined night as follows[28]:

> Night (*nox*) is so called from "harming" (*nocere*), because it impairs the eyes. It has the light of the moon and stars, so as not to be without adornment, and so that it may comfort all those who work at night, and so that it may have sufficient light for certain living creatures that cannot tolerate sunlight.[29]

By contrast, when Virgilius offered an etymology for "night" he suggested that "those who work at night" might not deserve such comforts:

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24 "'Mare' a Latinis ex amaritudine diriuari putatur, ab Hebreis aquarum collectus dicitur." Bengt Löfstedt, ed., *Virgilius Maro Grammaticus: Opera Omnia* (Munich: 2003), 228.

25 "Mare est aquarum generalis collectio. Omnis enim congregatio aquarum, sive salsae sint sive dulces, abusive maria nuncupantur [...] Proprie autem mare appellatum eo quod aquae eius amarae sint."

26 Kuno Meyer, *Learning in Ireland in the Fifth Century and the Transmission of Letters* (Dublin: 1913), 22, n. 7: "When they are examined it will be seen that though the actual etymology is the same, nowhere is there any literal agreement such as we might reasonably expect to find if there had been borrowing either way."

27 Herren, "New Light on Virgilius Maro Grammaticus," 45.

28 For this example, see Polara, "Virgilio Marone," 116.

29 "Nox a nocendo dicta, eo quod oculis noceat. Quae idcirco lunae ac siderum lucem habet, ne indecora esset, et ut consolaretur omnes nocte operantes, et ut quibusdam animantibus, quae lucem solis ferre non possunt ad sufficientiam temperaretur."

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> "Night" is so called because it interferes with human affairs or because during it thieves and brigands find opportunity to injure others.[30]

Isolating humour or parody in medieval texts is no easy thing, but Virgilius's jokes—if such they were—presuppose extensive familiarity with the *Etymologiae* on the part of his audience. At the very least, Virgilius's writings show an author engaged deeply with Isidore and his work.

When was Virgilius writing? Perhaps inevitably, this is no easy question to answer. Virgilius's works were known to Aldhelm of Malmesbury (see below) by 690, but he may have been cited earlier in an Irish computistical compilation—the so-called *Sirmond* collection.[31] This comprised computistical material deriving from Spain (see above) and works produced or circulating in Ireland; eventually it would travel to England, where it formed the basis of Bede's own computus.[32] The *Sirmond* collection now survives in—or, perhaps better, can be reconstructed from—a number of Continental manuscripts, dating from the 8th century onwards. One item common to many of these manuscripts is a dating clause, calculable as 658.[33] If this were the date that the *Sirmond* collection itself was compiled, as Ó Cróinín has argued, then Virgilius could be assigned safely to the mid-7th century. If, however, the date applies only to the item in which the clause is found—an item that does not draw on Virgilius—then such certainty is impossible.[34] The waters are muddied further by the recent discovery of a new *Sirmond* manuscript: Bremen, Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek, msc 0046.[35] This contains an item with another dating

30 "'Nox' dicitur ab eo, quod humanis noceat negotiis, siue quod in ea fures latronesque nocendi aliis occasionem nanciscantur." Virgilius Maro Grammaticus, *Epitoma* 11, Löfstedt, ed., *Opera Omnia*, 234.

31 Herren, "On the Earliest Irish Acquaintance with Isidore of Seville," 247, and Dáibhí Ó Cróinín, "The Date, Provenance, and Earliest Use of the Works of Virgilius Maro Grammaticus," in *Early Irish History and Chronology* (Dublin: 2003), 191–200.

32 Charles W. Jones, "The 'Lost' Sirmond Manuscript of Bede's Computus," *English Historical Review* 52 (1937), 204–19; Charles W. Jones, ed., *Bedae Opera de temporibus* (Cambridge, Mass.: 1943), 103–13; and Dáibhí Ó Cróinín, "The Irish Provenance of Bede's Computus," in *Early Irish History*, 173–90. For more on the development and transmission of computistical texts in this period, see Immo Warntjes's chapter in this volume.

33 Ó Cróinín, "Irish Provenance," 177–78, and Ó Cróinín, "Date, Provenance, and Earliest Use," 193–97.

34 Doubts about whether the 658 date applies to the compilation of the whole collection are discussed by Immo Warntjes, ed. and trans., *The Munich Computus: Text and Translation. Irish Computistics between Isidore of Seville and the Venerable Bede and Its Reception in Carolingian Times* (Stuttgart: 2010), LXXX–LXXI, n. 217.

35 Immo Warntjes, "A Newly Discovered Prologue of AD 699 to the Easter Table of Victorius of Aquitaine in an Unknown Sirmond Manuscript," *Peritia* 21 (2010), 257.

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clause, calculable as 699, pointing, perhaps, to a number of stages in the production of the *Sirmond* collection, spread out over several decades.[36]

For our purposes, these chronological uncertainties are doubly frustrating. As well as citing the work of Virgilius, a number of items in the *Sirmond* collection draw explicitly, and often verbatim, on Isidore, particularly the *Etymologiae* but also *De natura rerum*.[37] If the original compilation of the *Sirmond* collection could be dated to 658 or thereabouts it would be precious evidence for the early reception of Isidore's writings. That parts at least of the *Etymologiae* were being copied in Ireland by this time (see above) suggests that such a date is not implausible. The likely cultural milieu of the *Sirmond* collection may add further weight to this dating. The collection has connections to a productive and influential scholarly circle active in the southern midlands of Ireland across the middle decades of the 7th century.[38] This circle included Cummian, author of a relentlessly learned letter on the Paschal Controversy (*c*.633); the so-called Irish Augustine, author of *De mirabilibus sacrae scripturae* (655); Manchianus, teacher of the Irish Augustine and abbot of Men Drochait (d. 652); Laidcend mac Baíth Bandaig of Cluain Ferta Mo Lua (d. 661); Banbannus (d. 687?); as well as the otherwise unidentified Brecannus and Bercanus, son of Áed.[39] Virgilius, too, likely had links to this group.[40]

This scholarly circle looks to have played a role in the early adoption and dissemination of Isidorian knowledge. The old idea that Laidcend drew on Isidore's *De ortu et obitu patrum* in his abridgement of Gregory the Great's *Moralia in Iob* has by now been effectively dismantled.[41] That Laidcend did know something of Isidore's writings is demonstrated in another of his works, the so-called *Lorica Gildae* or *Suffragare trinitatis unitas*—a protective prayer

36 Warntjes, "A Newly Discovered Prologue," 275.

37 Dáibhí Ó Cróinín, "Bede's Irish Computus," in *Early Irish History*, 207.

38 Ó Cróinín, "Irish Provenance," 180–83, and Jones, *Bedae*, 97, for Cummian's use of material underlying the *Sirmond* collection. The early use of Virgilius may also point to a connection.

39 With the exception of the first two, all are named as authorities in an anonymous commentary on the Catholic Epistles; the names are printed in Alfred Holder, "Altirische Namen im Reichenauer Codex CCXXXIII," *Archiv für celtische Lexikographie* 3 (1907), 266. For discussion of this group, see Mario Esposito, "A Seventh-Century Commentary on the Catholic Epistles," in *Latin Learning in Medieval Ireland*, ed. Michael Lapidge (London: 1988), 316–18, and Ó Cróinín, "Irish Provenance," 180–83. For Cummian's membership in this circle, see Ó Cróinín, *Early Medieval Ireland*, 187.

40 Damian Bracken, "Virgilius Grammaticus and the Earliest Hiberno-Latin Literature," in *Ogma: Essays in Celtic studies in honour of Próinséas Ní Chatháin*, eds. Michael Richter and Jean-Michel Picard (Dublin: 2002), 251–61.

41 For discussion, see Smyth, "Isidorian Texts," 113–14.

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invoking God's aid and assistance.[42] Sections of this poem, particularly those concerning the different parts of the body, show a debt in terms of vocabulary to the *Etymologiae*. For example, in the extract below, the italicised words all occur in book 11.1:

> For *teeth*, *tongue*, *mouth*, uvula, *throat*, *windpipe*, *underside of the tongue*, *nape*, forehead, *cartilage*, *neck*; oh merciful one, stay near for protection.[43]

Though not all the vocabulary used by Laidcend was uncommon, the consistent overlap with the vocabulary of the *Etymologiae* throughout the *Lorica* suggests that Isidore was a key source. Indeed, the thematic structure of the *Etymologiae* must have made it ideally suited to aid the composition of list-poems like the *Lorica*. Less clear is whether Laidcend knew the *Etymologiae* directly or was relying on glossaries—his only debt to Isidore seems to be vocabulary. For what it is worth, many of Laidcend's Isidorian borrowings can be found in the St Gallen fragments discussed above, so direct inspiration is possible, even if not provable.

Also connected with this southern midlands circle may have been the composers of some or all of the interrelated texts known as the *Hisperica famina*—that is, the *Western Sayings* or *Latinacious Speakifications*, to use Andy Orchard's delightfully fitting rendering.[44] The recherché vocabulary used in these texts has become infamous—alongside obscure and perhaps self-consciously pretentious synonyms for simple Latin words, the "Faminators" employed Greek and Greek-derived words, coined new hybrids of Latin and Hebrew, and used frequent metonymy.[45] Almost everything about the *Hisperica famina* has been the subject of debate. Most would accept them as the product of an Irish cultural milieu and of a mid-7th-century date, but beyond this it is hard to go. They evoke a world of wandering scholars and itinerant masters, of flyting,

42 For the attribution to Laidcend mac Baíth Bandaig, see Herren, "Lorica Gildae."

43 "dentibus lingue ori uuae guttori gurgilioni et sublinguę ceruice capitali ceutro cartilagini collo clemens adesto tutamine," Laidcend, *Lorica Gildae* l.45–48, Francis John Henry Jenkinson, ed., *The Hisperica Famina* (Cambridge: 1908), 52. For the connection with Isidore, see Herren, "Lorica Gildae," 47–49.

44 Andy Orchard, "Latin and the Vernacular Languages: The Creation of a Bilingual Textual Culture," in *After Rome*, ed. Thomas Charles-Edwards (Oxford: 2003), 202. The texts are listed by Michael Lapidge and Richard Sharpe, *A Bibliography of Celtic-Latin Literature 400–1200* (Dublin: 1985), 93–94. For the connection to the south midlands, see Herren, "Lorica Gildae," 45.

45 Michael W. Herren, ed. and trans., *The Hisperica Famina: I. The A-Text* (Toronto: 1974), 44–49.

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competitive erudition, and learning never worn lightly. With their opaque and over-inflated vocabulary, they read like parodies of the simple colloquies that formed the basis of elementary Latin instruction—but parodies to what end?[46] Were they "models for the ornamentation of style," as Herren has suggested, or a part of an Insular *enigmata* tradition, their very obscurity the key to their didacticism?[47] Whatever their purpose, the *Hisperica famina* show a clear debt to the writings of Isidore. The *Etymologiae*, in particular, were a key source for vocabulary—indeed, in certain instances words from specific sections of Isidore's text were deployed in order ("A" text, lines 44–52):

> This elegant assemblage of scholars is dazzling, –
> now for leagues of lapsed time
> we have not seen a phalanx equal to it,
> nor through future regions of the temporal sphere
> shall we behold a throng to match its refulgent reputation.
> But nearby there lurks a fearful serpent
> which will wound this band with its deadly strike,
> unless they beseech the ruler of the vast universe
> to release the flourishing troop from mortal peril.[48]

This may be compared with Isidore, *Etymologiae* 9.3.46–64:

> Properly we speak of a *phalanx* of Macedonians, a "band" of Gauls, and a "legion" of our forces [...] It is called a column when an army marches.[49]

Whether the *Etymologiae* were drawn on directly or via glossaries is unclear. In contrast to Isidore, the Faminators had a tendency to flatten meaning and to

46 See, for example, Lapidge, "Latin Learning in Dark Age Wales," 96.

47 Herren, *The Hisperica Famina*, 18, and for the insular riddling tradition, Andy Orchard, "The *Hisperica famina* as Literature," *Journal of Medieval Latin* 10 (2000), 1–45, and Sarah Corrigan, "Hisperic Enigma Machine: Sea Creatures and Sources in the *Hisperica Famina*," *Peritia* 24–25 (2013–14), 59–73.

48 "Hic comptus arcatorum exomicat coetus, cui dudum per lapsa temporum stadia parem non creuimus phalangem, nec futura temporalis globi per pagula equiperatam fulgidi rumoris speculabimur cateruam. Sed presto horrendus asstat chelidrus, qui talem uipereo ictu sauciabit turbam, nisi uasti exigerint rectorem poli qui florigerum agmen reguloso soluerit discrimine," Herren, *The Hisperica Famina*, 66–69; the debt to Isidore is discussed by Herren at 20–21.

49 "Proprie autem Macedonum phalanx, Gallorum caterva, nostra legio dicitur. [...] Agmen dicitur cum exercitus iter facit."

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neglect the nuances that separated near-synonyms.[50] Such might be explained by the use of glossaries, where definitions of words would necessarily be short and simplified.[51] This might also account for seeming mistakes or confusions of meaning. Thus "proritus" (classical Latin "pruritus"—"itching") is used in the *Hisperica famina* to mean, apparently, "star" or "burning." The error—or shift in meaning—looks to have arisen from a misunderstanding of Isidore's definition: "*Prurigo* is so called from burning up and flaming" (4.8.7).[52] A glossary that simply offered "Prurigo: perurens, ardens" on the basis of this definition would go some way towards explaining the Faminators' usage.[53]

Evidence for the use of other works by Isidore in the *Hisperica famina* is minimal—*De natura rerum* may have been drawn on, as may *De differentiis verborum*.[54] Herren has suggested the *Synonyma* may have inspired something of the style adopted by the Faminators, particularly their painstaking avoidance of repeated words.[55] In the absence of direct borrowing this is beyond proof; indeed, a recent survey of the transmission of the *Synonyma* denied that they were known at all in Ireland in the 7th or 8th centuries.[56]

If the religious institutions of the south midlands were amongst the earliest adopters of Isidorian knowledge in Ireland, enthusiasm for his writings quickly spread. By the end of the 7th century his works were, for example, a key intellectual resource at the Irish foundation on Iona. In *De locis sanctis*, a description of the Holy Land based on the travels of the Frankish bishop, Arculf, Adomnán, abbot of Iona from 679 to 704, drew on at least two of Isidore's work—the *Etymologiae* and *De natura rerum*.[57] Information from Isidore allowed Adomnán to fill out his descriptions, to provide history and detail, and,

50 M. Roger, *L'enseignement des lettres classique d'Ausone à Alcuin* (Paris: 1905), 243.

51 Michael Winterbottom, review of: Herren, *The Hisperica Famina: I. A-Text*, in *Medium Ævum* 45 (1976), 109.

52 "Prurigo vocata est a perurendo et ardendo." For discussion, see Herren, "Lorica Gildae," 43.

53 It is also worth noting that someone reading Isidore's definition in context—it is in a section entitled "Illnesses that appear on the surface of the body"—would be unlikely to make a mistake of this kind.

54 Herren, *The Hisperica Famina*, 22.

55 Herren, *The Hisperica Famina*, 17–18.

56 Matthew T. Hussey, "*Transmarinis litteris*: Southumbria and the Transmission of Isidore's *Synonyma*," *Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 107 (2008), 146–48.

57 Thomas O'Loughlin, "The Library of Iona in the Late Seventh Century: The Evidence from Adomnán's *De locis sanctis*," *Ériu* 45 (1994), 47–49.

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perhaps, to check the veracity of Arculf's account.[58] Chapter thirty of book 2 is particularly indebted to Isidore,[59] for example:

> Adomnán, *De locis sanctis* 2.30: On the right side of the port [i.e. Alexandria] there is a small island, on which there is a very tall tower which the Greeks and Latins in common have named 'lighthouse' from its particular use, because it may be seen from far off by sailors in order that, before they approach the port, they may, specially during the night, recognise the proximity of land by the light of the flames, that they would not be deceived in the darkness and run onto the rocks or fail to recognise the boundaries of the entrance.[60]

> Isidore, *Etymologiae* 15.2.37: A lighthouse is a very tall tower which the Greeks and Latins in common have named "lighthouse" from its particular use, because thanks to its signal of flames it may be seen from far off by sailors. Ptolemy is said to have constructed such a lighthouse near Alexandria for eight hundred talents of gold. Its function was to show a light for ships sailing at night, in order to make known the channels and the entrance to the port, so that sailors would not be deceived in the darkness and run onto the rocks.[61]

As can be seen, Adomnán has first applied Isidore's general etymology of lighthouse to that at Alexandria in particular and then partly copied verbatim and partly paraphrased Isidore's account of the Pharos—an approach Adomnán adopts throughout the whole of the chapter.

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58 Describing the miraculous footprints of Christ on the Mount of Olives, Adomnán notes that Arculf's account is confirmed by other writings, *De locis sanctis* 1.23

59 O'Loughlin, "The Library of Iona," 47.

60 "In eiusdem dextera portus parua insula habetur, in qua maxima turris est, quam in commone greci ac latini ex ipsius rei usu farum uocitarunt eo quod longe a nauigantibus uideatur, ut prius quam in portum adpropinquent nocturno maxime tempore terram finitimam sibi esse flammarum incendio cognoscant, ne tenebris decepti in scopulos incedant aut ne uestibuli limitem non queant conprehendere," P. Geyer, O. Cuntz, A. Francheschini, R. Weber, L. Bieler, J. Fraipont, and F. Glorie, eds., *Itineraria et alia geographica*, CCSL 175 (Turnhout: 1965), trans. James Rose MacPherson, *The Pilgrimage of Arculfus in the Holy Land* (London: 1889), 49–50, with modifications.

61 "Farum turris est maxima quam Graeci ac Latini in commune ex ipsius rei usu farum appellaverunt, eo quod flammarum indicio longe videatur a navigantibus, qualem Ptolomaeus iuxta Alexandriam construxisse octingentis talentis traditur. Usus eius est nocturno navium cursu ignes ostendere, ad pronuntianda vada portusque introitus, ne decepti tenebris navigantes in scopulos incidant."

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We also find Isidore being used in the monastic classroom on Iona.[62] The so-called *Explanatio Iunii Philargyrii* or *Explanationes in Bucolica*—two versions of which survive—is a short commentary on Virgil's *Eclogues*. Alongside extracts from the work of Junius Philargyrius, the *Explanatio* contains classroom notes based on a teacher's exposition of the *Eclogues*. A number of glosses in Old Irish—dateable to *c.*700—together with a reference to one "Adamnanus" make it probable that the teacher in question was Abbot Adomnán himself. Isidore's *Etymologiae* were one of the resources drawn on to interpret and understand Virgil. Thus, when discussing *Eclogues* 3.8, "I know who was with you while the goats looked askance," the *Explanatio* quotes *Etymologiae* 12.1.14 verbatim: "the he-goat is a lascivious animal and always eager to mate; his eyes look sideways on account of wantonness, whence he has taken his name, for according to Suetonius, *hirqui* are the corners of the eyes."[63]

Some measure of the authority Isidore's writings had attained by the 8th century is provided by another work with Ionan connections—the *Collectio canonum Hibernensis*. This work dates to the late 7th or the 8th century and, according to a colophon in one manuscript, at least parts of it were the work of Ruben of Dairinis (d. 725) and Cú Chuimne of Iona (d. 747).[64] It now survives in two recensions—A and B—whose relationship with each other and with any putative original version is complex and not yet fully understood. Despite its title, the *Collectio* is far more ambitious in scope than a straightforward canon law collection. Rather, it is an attempt, in Maurice Sheeley's words, "to draw up a blue-print for all aspects of Christian living."[65] The key innovation of the *Collectio* was its use of authorities. Where earlier collections of canon law had drawn almost exclusively on papal decretals and synodal canons, the *Collectio* employed a wider range of materials—the Bible, writings of the Church Fathers and other ecclesiastical authors, along with penitentials, monastic rules,

62 What follows is based on the discussion by Michael Lapidge, "Aldhelm and the 'Epinal-Erfurt Glossary,'" in *Aldhelm and Sherborne: Essays to Celebrate the Founding of the Bishopric*, eds. Katherine Barker and Nicholas Brooks (Oxford: 2010), 144–47. For further discussion and for doubts about Adomnán's role, although nevertheless accepting Irish involvement in the production of the *Explanatio*, see Michael W. Herren, "Literary and Glossarial Evidence for the Study of Classical Mythology in Ireland A.D. 600–800," in *Text and Gloss: Studies in Insular Language and Literature Presented to Joseph Donovan Pheifer*, eds. Helen Conrad O'Briain, Anne-Marie D'Arcy, and John Scattergood (Dublin: 1999), 55–60.

63 "Hircus lascivum animal et petulcum et fervens semper ad coitum; cuius oculi ob libidine in transversum aspiciunt, unde et nomen traxit. Nam hirqui sunt oculorum anguli secundum Suetonium."

64 Luned Mair Davies, "Isidorian Texts and the *Hibernensis*," *Peritia* 11 (1997), 212–16.

65 Cited in Davies, "Isidorian Texts and the *Hibernensis*," 208.

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and other Christian literature.[66] Isidore was amongst these new authorities, with at least five of his works utilised—the *Etymologiae*, *De ecclesiasticis officiis*, the *Chronicon*, the *Sententiae*, and the *Quaestiones in uetus Testamentum*—along with a number of pseudo-Isidorian works.[67] Of the two recensions of the *Collectio*, B makes the most frequent use of Isidore, but both recensions often open sections with an Isidorian etymology. For example, book 1 of recension A opens with a chapter entitled "Concerning the name of the bishop":

> The name "bishop" is taken from the Greek, changing "os" in "us," which in Latin is "overseer" or "supervisor"
>
> Isidore says: *"scopus," indeed, is "intention," therefore we can say in Latin that a bishop supervises*.
>
> Isidore: *However, the episcopacy, as a certain of the wise says, is the name of a burden not an honour.* It should be noted that bishops are named "sacerdotes" and also priests are held to have the name "sacerdotes." Similarly, it should be known that bishops and priests took their names in the New Law, however, sacerdotes were named both in the Old and the New Law.[68]

The italicised text is a direct quotation from *De ecclesiasticis officiis* 2.5.8, and the underlined material a paraphrase and adaptation. The rest of the material may be drawing on sections of the *Etymologiae*, such as 7.12, but seems otherwise to be original to the *Collectio*.

Our discussion has so far focused on texts that can be closely located or to which an attribution of Irish authorship is relatively uncontroversial. There exists, however, a large corpus of anonymous exegetical writings that may be the work of Irish authors. These texts were first identified by Bischoff, who argued that they contained "irischen Symptomen"—that is, clusters of particular features that are not in themselves unique to Irish works but which Bischoff

66 Roy Flechner, "The Problem of Originality in Early Medieval Canon Law: Legislating by Means of Contradictions in the *Collectio Hibernensis*," *Viator* 43 (2012), 29–30.

67 Davies, "Isidorian Texts and the *Hibernensis*"; her figure of six Isidorian texts at 242–43 includes the *Epistola ad Massonam*.

68 "Episcopus nomen a graeco ductum, os in us convertens, quod latine superspeculator sive superintentor dicitur. Isidorus ait: scopus quidem intentio est, ergo episcopum latine superintendentem possumus dicere. Isidorus: Episcopatus autem, ut quidam prudentium ait, nomen est oneris non honoris. Notandum est, quod episcopi sacerdotes nominantur, nec non et prespiteri sacerdotum nomine censentur. Item sciendum est, episcopos et prespiteros in nova lege sumsisse vocabula, sacerdotes vero sive in veteri sive in novo nuncupatos," Hermann Wasserschleben, ed., *Die irische Kanonensammlung* (Giessen: 1874), 3.

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believed to be diagnostic when occurring together or in high frequency.[69] Bischoff's thesis has not been without its critics, nor have all his attributions been accepted.[70] It is difficult also to use Bischoff's methods to distinguish texts produced in Ireland from texts produced by Irish scholars on the Continent or by those trained by Irish masters. Nevertheless, most scholars would accept that at least some of the texts identified by Bischoff can be safely attributed to an Irish cultural milieu. Only a limited number of these anonymous commentaries have yet been edited, so assessing their debt to Isidore and the role his writings played in their composition remains problematic.[71] One conclusion can be drawn, however. The culmination of this early Irish exegetical activity was the anonymous text that Bischoff labelled "das Bibelwerk."[72] This was a commentary on all the books of the Bible—a monumental undertaking—produced in Ireland in the second half of the 8th century. The compilers quoted Isidore at length—at excessive length, Bischoff felt—and drew on at least six of his works: the *Etymologiae*, *De natura rerum*, *De ecclesiasticis officiis*, *De ortu et obitu patrum*, *Quaestiones in uetus testamentum*, and the *Chronicon*.[73] Most significantly, the whole work opens with the second and third chapters of book 6 of the *Etymologiae*.[74] That is, by the middle of the 8th century, Isidore's authority in Ireland was such that his writings were the obvious starting point for a commentary as ambitious and important as "das Bibelwerk."

3 Isidore in the Anglo-Saxon Kingdoms

As the writings of Isidore were stimulating a cultural efflorescence in Ireland, so, too, was England seeing the first buds of its own intellectual flowering.

69 Bernhard Bischoff, "Wendepunkte in der Geschichte der lateinischen Exegese in Frühmittelalter," *Sacris Erudiri* 6 (1954), 204.

70 For a discussion, see Dáibhí Ó Cróinín, "Bischoff's Wendepunkte Fifty Years On," *Revue Bénédictine* 110 (2000), 204–37, and, more sceptically, Mark Stansbury, "Irish Biblical Exegesis," in *The Irish in Early Medieval Europe: Identity, Culture, and Religion*, eds. Roy Flechner and Sven Meeder (London: 2016), 116–30.

71 For a useful summary of what can be learnt see Di Sciacca, *Finding the Right Words*, 41–45.

72 Bischoff, "Wendepunkte," 211 and 223–30.

73 Martin McNamara, "Plan and Source Analysis of Das Bibelwerk, Old Testament," in *Irland und die Christenheit: Bibelstudien und Mission*, eds. Próinséas Ní Chatháin and Michael Richter (Stuttgart: 1987), 111. For the unnecessarily lengthy quotations from Isidore, Bischoff, "Wendepunkte," 211.

74 McNamara, "Plan and Source Analysis of Das Bibelwerk, Old Testament," 88.

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Here, initial stimulus was less the importation of new works or the fervour of ecclesiastical controversy and more the arrival in 669–70 of two inspirational teachers: Theodore and Hadrian. The former, born in Tarsus in the Hellenic Roman diocese of Cilicia and educated in Antioch and Constantinople, was the papally appointed archbishop of Canterbury; the latter, of North African origin, would become abbot of the monastery of St Peter and Paul in Canterbury.[75] Both men were fluent in Greek and Latin, and the school that they founded at Canterbury transformed the intellectual culture of Anglo-Saxon England. The Venerable Bede described the school in glowing terms:

> because both of them were extremely learned in sacred and secular literature, they attracted a crowd of students into whose minds they daily poured the streams of wholesome learning. They gave their hearers instruction not only in the books of Holy Scripture but also in the art of metre, astronomy, and ecclesiastical computation. As evidence of this, some of their students still survive who know Latin and Greek just as well as their native tongue.[76]

No writings by Hadrian are now extant, and little can be attributed directly to Theodore.[77] What do survive, albeit at several removes, are notes of their teachings and pronouncements, written down by their students—the most famous of these being the various collections of penitential decrees transmitted under Theodore's name.[78] More significant for our purposes, however, are the brief biblical commentaries and glossaries that preserve some of Theodore's and Hadrian's teachings. What this material demonstrates is the central role of the

75 Michael Lapidge, "The Career of Archbishop Theodore" and "The School of Theodore and Hadrian," both in *Anglo-Latin Literature 600–899* (London: 1996), at 93–121 and 141–68, respectively.

76 "Et quia litteris sacris simul et saecularibus, ut diximus, abundanter ambo erant instructi, congregata discipulorum caterua scientiae salutaris cotidie flumina inrigandis eorum cordibus emanabant, ita ut etiam metricae artis, astronomiae et arithmetiae ecclesiasticae disciplinam inter sacrorum apicum uolumina suis auditoribus contraderent. Indicio est quod usque hodie supersunt de eorum discipulis, qui Latinam Graecamque linguam aeque ut propriam in qua nati sunt norunt," Bede, *Historia Ecclesiastica* 4.2, Bertram Colgrave and R.A.B. Mynors, eds. and trans., *Bede's Ecclesiastical History of the English People* (Oxford: 1969), 332–35.

77 Michael Lapidge, "Theodore and Anglo-Latin Octosyllabic Verse," in *Anglo-Latin Literature 600–899*, 225–45, and Jane Barbara Stevenson, "Theodore and the *Laterculus Malalianus*," in *Archbishop Theodore: Commemorative Studies on His Life and Influence*, ed. Michael Lapidge (Cambridge: 1995), 204–21.

78 Thomas Charles-Edwards, "The Penitential of Theodore and the *Iudicia Theodori*," in, *Archbishop Theodore*, Lapidge, 141–74.

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works of Isidore—the *Etymologiae* in particular—in the Canterbury classroom. As Porter observed, "the *Etymologiae* was not just a major interpretative tool at Canterbury, but in fact it looks very much like the reference book of first choice for practically any question."[79]

Of the biblical commentaries, only the first commentary on the Pentateuch; supplementary commentaries on Genesis, Exodus, and the Gospels; and the Second Commentary on the Gospels have yet been published.[80] Though Isidore is not mentioned by name in these commentaries, his etymologies inform a number of the discussions.[81] For example, the reference to a razor ("nouacula") in Numbers 6:5 is explained thus:

> *Razor is so-called because it 'renews'* the skin; it is the breadth of the fingers and is shaped thus[82]

The italicised words are quoted directly from the *Etymologiae* 20.13.4—though Isidore states a razor renews the face rather than the skin. In other cases, Isidorian etymologies look to lie behind a comment or interpretation, even if no vocabulary is borrowed directly. Thus, when discussing Abimelech of Gerar, the Canterbury commentary notes:

> *Abimelech the king sent*: that is, "abimelech" is a title, just like "pharaoh" among the Egyptians, or 'Caesar' among the Romans, or "Augustus," as the text subsequently makes clear.[83]

In the *Etymologiae* 7.6.43, Isidore stated:

> Pharaoh is the name not of a person, but of a position of rank, just as among us kings are called "Augustus"[84]

79 David W. Porter, "Isidore's *Etymologiae* at the School of Canterbury," *Anglo-Saxon England* 43 (2014), 13.

80 Bernhard Bischoff and Michael Lapidge, eds. and trans., *Biblical Commentaries from the Canterbury School of Theodore and Hadrian* (Cambridge: 1994).

81 Bischoff and Lapidge, *Biblical Commentaries*, 204–05.

82 "*Nouacula*: dicitur eo quod cutem innouat; est digitorum latitudinis, talisque est eius figura," Bischoff and Lapidge, *Biblical Commentaries*, 374–75.

83 "*Misit ergo rex Abimelech*: .i. nomen dignitatis ut Pharao apud Ægyptios, ut Caesar cum Romanis, uel Augustus, quod ostendit postea," Bischoff and Lapidge, *Biblical Commentaries*, 326–27.

84 "Pharao nomen est non hominis, sed honoris, sicut et apud nos Augusti appellantur reges."

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Lengthier quotations from the *Etymologiae* are made on at least two occasions. The discussion of Paradise in the Genesis commentary is taken directly from *Etymologiae* 14.3.2–4, with some additional alternative information about its location, probably from Greek sources, added at the end.[85] Likewise, the consideration of the ephod in the first commentary on the Pentateuch draws largely verbatim on *Etymologiae* 16.13.2 in a discussion of diamonds, with the exploration of the ephod itself seemingly dependent on Eucherius of Lyon's *Instructiones*.[86]

Though the Canterbury biblical commentaries make use of Isidore, his works are by no means central. To understand the paramount importance of Isidore's writings to the school at Canterbury we need to turn to the glossaries. Of these, the most significant are the *Leiden Glossary* and its related texts.[87] The *Leiden Glossary* comprises forty-eight chapters, two of which (26 and 27) gloss words derived from works by Isidore—*De ecclesiasticis officiis* and *De natura rerum*, respectively. Chapter 47—headed "Item alia"—also includes a number of lemmata from the *Etymologiae*.[88] More significantly, a large number of the interpretamenta—that is, the definitions of the words—are drawn from the *Etymologiae*; Porter identified some 142 examples.[89] In some cases, the *Etymologiae* are quoted verbatim or near verbatim:

> Sicera: is any drink apart from wine that can inebriate a person. Although its name is Hebrew, it still has a Latin sound because it is made from the juice of grain or fruits.[90]

This is effectively the opening of *Etymologiae* 20.3.16, with a few spelling variants. In other cases, Isidore's etymologies are stripped down to their barest essentials. Thus:

85 Bischoff and Lapidge, *Biblical Commentaries*, 388.

86 Bischoff and Lapidge, *Biblical Commentaries*, 354—the borrowing from Eucherius is not noted by Bischoff and Lapidge.

87 Michael Lapidge, "Old English Glossography: The Latin Context," in *Anglo-Latin Literature 600–899*, 169–81, and J.D. Pheifer, "Early Anglo-Saxon Glossaries and the School of Canterbury," *Anglo-Saxon England* 16 (1987), 17–44.

88 Porter, "Isidore's *Etymologiae*," 9.

89 Porter, "Isidore's *Etymologiae*," 9. The discussion in this and the following section is indebted to Porter's work.

90 "Sicera: est omnis potio que extra uinum inebriare potest cuius licet nomen hebreum sit tamen latinum sonat pro eo quod ex suco frumentorum et pomorum conficitur," Leiden Glossary 1.111, John Henry Hessels, ed., *A Late Eighth-Century Latin-Anglo-Saxon Glossary Preserved in the Library of the Leiden University* (Cambridge: 1906), 3.

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> Leiden Glossary 2.13: Library: a depository of books[91]
>
> *Etymologiae* 6.3.1: A library takes its name from Greek, because books are deposited there.[92]

The debt is deeper than a simple borrowing of etymologies. The evidence from the Leiden Glossary implies that the *Etymologiae* suggested which words in a text to gloss. That is, the *Etymologiae* were not turned to when a difficult word was encountered in a text but instead provided guidance as to which words would repay further attention.[93] On a number of occasions, successive lemmata are glossed from the same section of the *Etymologiae*:

> Leiden Glossary 1.100–01: *Proconsolaris*: in the place of consuls because they were substitutes for consuls
>
> *Procuratores*: because they discharged duties in the place of curators[94]
>
> *Etymologiae* 9.3.8: Proconsuls were substitutes for consuls, and were called proconsuls because they would function in place of consuls, as a procurator does in place of a curator, that is, an agent.[95]

Similarly, "coenobium" and "monasterium," successive entries in chapter 2, are both glossed from the same passage in 15.4.5–6.[96]

Isidore's writings, the *Etymologiae* in particular, were clearly a key intellectual resource at Canterbury. An epitome of the *Etymologiae*, now surviving in a Frankish manuscript written around 800, sheds further light on how Isidore's text was used.[97] The original exemplar for this epitome was clearly Anglo-Saxon, for it incorporates a number of glosses in Old English, dateable on linguistic grounds to *c*.700, along with Insular orthography and abbreviations.[98]

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91 "Biblioteca: reconditorium librorum," Hessels, *Latin-Anglo-Saxon Glossary*, 3.

92 "Bibliotheca a Graeco nomen accepit, eo quod ibi recondantur libri."

93 Porter, "Isidore's *Etymologiae*," 15.

94 "Proconsolaris: in uice consulis quia suffecti erunt consulibus. Procuratores: quod uice curatoris fungantur," Hessels, *Latin-Anglo-Saxon Glossary*, 2–3.

95 "Proconsules suffecti erant consulibus, et dicti proconsules eo quod vicem consulis fungerentur, sicut procurator curatori, id est actori."

96 Porter, "Isidore's *Etymologiae*," 14.

97 Michael Lapidge, "An Isidorian Epitome from Early Anglo-Saxon England," in *Anglo-Latin Literature 600–899*, 185.

98 Lapidge, "An Isidorian Epitome," 187–89.

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Where it was produced is uncertain but Canterbury, or a centre closely connected to it, is most likely. The epitome draws on the whole of the *Etymologiae*—in some cases bringing together information from a number of different places in the text—and its compiler, in Lapidge's words, basically "showed sound judgment in what he included and what he omitted."[99] A few mistakes caused by injudicious précising or copying did creep in, however. Even the most otherworldly monk would be puzzled by the statement that the Lacedaemonians, "fearing that they would lose any hope of offspring because of the prolongation of the conflict [...] commanded that their maidens should lie with the women remaining at home."[100] This epitome was not the only one in circulation; a number of later glossaries point to another, different in composition and more fully glossed in Old English than the one now extant.[101] The existence of these different epitomes led Rusche to suggest that such abridgements "may have been the standard form of transmission for Isidore's text in England as early as the late seventh century."[102]

The most famous alumnus of the school at Canterbury was Aldhelm of Malmesbury (d. 709). Although he received his early education at the hands of an Irishman and spent time on Iona, it was his time at Canterbury that was central to his intellectual development—or so he himself believed.[103] Aldhelm produced an extensive body of writing, from riddles to treatises in praise of virginity and chastity, and these demonstrate his familiarity with at least five of Isidore's works—*De ecclesiasticis officiis*, *De natura rerum*, *De ortu et obitu patrum*, the *Etymologiae*, and the *Synonyma*. [104]

Aldhelm's writings are indebted to Isidore both in terms of content and style. Isidore's *De ortu et obitu patrum*, for example, supplied Aldhelm with much of the information that he incorporated into his tituli on the Twelve Apostles (*Carmen Ecclesiasticum* IV).[105] *De Ortu* likewise supplied biographical information for Adlhelm's two treatises on virginity. In these examples,

99 Lapidge, "An Isidorian Epitome," 193.

100 Lapidge, "An Isidorian Epitome," 196–97, text at 223: "ueriti ne diuturnitate belli spem prolis amitterent, preciperunt ut uirgines eorum cum mulieribus domi relictis concuberent."

101 Philip G. Rusche, "Isidore's *Etymologiae* and the Canterbury Aldhelm Scholia," *Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 104 (2005), 452–55. For an alternative view, Porter, "Isidore's *Etymologiae*," 22–30.

102 Rusche, "Isidore's *Etymologiae*," 455.

103 Michael Lapidge, "The Career of Aldhelm," *Anglo-Saxon England* 36 (2007), 15–69, and Michael Lapidge, "Aldhelm and the 'Epinal-Erfurt Glossary,'" 147–57.

104 Michael Lapidge, *The Anglo-Saxon Library* (Oxford: 2005), 181.

105 Michael Lapidge and James Rosier, trans., *Aldhelm: The Poetic Works* (Cambridge: 1985), 42–43.

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Aldhelm simply incorporated information he had quarried from Isidore's writings. In other cases, he cited Isidore verbatim, albeit without acknowledging his source. Thus, in his letter to King Geraint of Dumnonia, concerning the Easter question and ecclesiastical unity, Adlhelm drew on *De ecclesiasticiis officiis* 2.4.3–4 when discussing the tonsure:

> *Indeed, the tiara among the ancients was set upon the head of priests; it was round made of twisted fine linen, and was in the shape of a half sphere, and this is signified in the shaved part of the head. A crown, however, is a circular golden perimeter which girds the head of kings. And so each sign is expressed on the head of clerics, in words of Peter "But you are a chosen generation, a kingly priesthood."* This method of tonsuring and shaving is a sign that vices are trimmed back and that we are shorn of the hair of our flesh as though of crimes.[106]

Here, Aldhelm altered the overall order of his material, giving the lengthy description from 2.4.4 (in italics above) before adapting Isidore's pun on "criminibus" ("crimes") and "crinibus" ("hairs") (underlined above). Earlier in this section, Aldhelm had also drawn briefly on 2.4.1, including, interestingly, Isidore's own statement "unless I am mistaken" ("nisi fallor").

Isidore also contributed to Aldhelm's distinctive diction. In certain cases, particular sections from the *Etymologiae* look to have provided both vocabulary and overall structuring principles for Aldhelm's writing. For example:

> Aldhelm, *De Virginitate* 60: I shall try with artistry to adorn the renown of this same chastity, with Christ's co-operation, in the heroic measures of hexameter verse, and, as if the rhetorical foundation-stones were now laid and the walls of prose were built up, so I shall—trusting in heavenly support—build a sturdy roof with trochaic slates and dactylic tiles of metre.[107]

106 "Nam tiara apud veteres in capite sacerdotum constituebatur; haec bisso retorto rotunda erat quasi spera media: et hoc significatur in parte capitis tonsa; corona autem latitudo aurea est circuli, quae regum capita cingit . Utrumque itaque signum exprimitur in capite clericorum Petro dicente: Vos estis genus electum, regale sacerdotium. Hoc ritu tondendi et radendi, ut vitia resecentur, signatur et crinibus carnis nostrae quasi criminibus exuamur," Rudolf Ehwald, ed., *Aldhelmi Opera*, MGH AA 15 (Berlin: 1919), 483, Michael Lapidge and Michael W. Herren, trans., *Aldhelm: The Prose Works* (Cambridge: 1979), 157.

107 "heroicis exametrorum versibus eiusdem praeconium pudicitiae subtiliter comere Christo cooperante conabor et, velut iactis iam rethoricis fundamentis et constructis prosae parietibus, cum tegulis trochaicis et dactilicis metrorum imbricibus firmissimum culmen

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> *Etymologiae* 15.8.1–15: 1. A foundation is so-called because it is the bottom of a house […] 2. A wall is so called because there are always two of equal size […] 4. […] Roofs are so called because the ancients covered their roofing with straw […] 15. […] Roof-tiles, because they cover; and "curved roof-tiles" because they fend off the rain.[108]

Unlike the Faminators, Aldhelm does not look to have "flattened" the meanings of words derived from Isidore. Though Aldhelm did use near-synonyms from Isidore to provide elegant variation, he also used differences of meaning as a method of structuring and developing passages.[109]

As well as information and vocabulary, Aldhelm took from Isidore a method for gaining knowledge and insight—etymologising. As Howe summarises, "the characteristics of a thing or creature should not be divorced from its name and etymology, because together they form a unified body of knowledge."[110] Such can be seen clearly in Aldhelm's riddles or *Enigmata*. Isidore was certainly a source of information for these riddles—for example, Aldhelm repeats Isidore's mistake about the minotaur, taking "mino" to be a general term for "man."[111] More important, however, was Isidore's influence on the pedagogic purpose of the riddles. One curious feature of Aldhelm's riddles is that the "solution" to the riddle is given as its title—seemingly defeating the purpose of the exercise. Moreover, Aldhelm's *Enigmata* are not, on the face of it, particularly enigmatic.[112] Yet this misses the point of what Aldhelm was doing. The thing that was to be solved, the meaning to be unravelled, was not the text of the riddle, but its title. The body of the riddle was a means of better understanding the title word, a means of holding it up to scrutiny, of interrogating it, and gaining greater insight.[113]

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caelesti confisus suffragio imponam," Ehwald, *Aldhelmi Opera*, 321, Lapidge and Herren, *Aldhelm: The Prose Works*, 130–31. This example is highlighted by Roger, *L'enseignement des lettres classique*, 297 n. 1.

108 "Fundamentum dictum quod fundus sit domui. […] Paries nuncupatus quia semper duo sunt pares […]Culmina dicta sunt quia apud antiquos tecta culmo tegebantur […] Tegulae, quod tegant aedes; et imbrices, quod accipiant imbres."

109 John Marenbon, "Les Sources du Vocabulaire d'Aldhelm," *Archivum Latinitatis Medii Aevi* 41 (1979), 86–87.

110 Nicholas Howe, "Aldhelm's *Enigmata* and Isidorian Etymology," *Anglo-Saxon England* 14 (1985), 38.

111 Howe, "Aldhelm's *Enigmata*," 42.

112 Howe, "Aldhelm's *Enigmata*," 37.

113 Howe, "Aldhelm's *Enigmata*." For further discussion of Isidore's impact on Aldhelm and on the subsequent Anglo-Latin and Old English enigmata tradition, see Mercedes

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As Theodore and Hadrian were transforming learning in the south, an equally fruitful—and in many ways far more influential—period was beginning in Northumbria. The Venerable Bede (d. 735) was the most famous product of this period, but the so-called "Northumbrian Renaissance" was broader. Alongside the poet Lutting of Lindisfarne can be placed the considerable hagiographical output from Northumbria in this period—the anonymous *Vita Cuthberti* (*c.*699), the Whitby *Vita Gregorii* (post 704), Stephen of Ripon's *Vita Wilfridi* (*c.*710–20), and the anonymous *Vita Ceolfridi* (post 716).[114] That the writings of Isidore played a part in this renaissance is clear, but how the Spaniard was viewed and the value placed on his works in 8th-century Northumbria have been the subject of considerable debate.

Though Isidore was used in works by some of Bede's contemporaries—the anonymous *Vita Cuthberti*, for example, quotes from *De ecclesiasticis officiis*[115]—the best evidence for Isidore's reception in Northumbria comes from Bede's own output. Though Bede's historical and hagiographical works are best known, his writings covered a much broader range embracing exegesis, figures of speech and tropes, metrics, geography, cosmography, and the computus. These writings show Bede to have been familiar with at least eight of Isidore's works—the *Chronicon*, *De differentiis verborum*, *De ecclesiasticis officiis*, *De natura rerum*, *De ortu et obitu patrum*, the *Etymologiae*, *Quaestiones in uetus Testamentum*, and the *Sententiae*.[116]

Tracing Bede's specific debts to Isidore presents particular problems. Firstly, Bede tended not to refer by name to the authorities that he drew on. He did devise a system of marginal annotations for a number of his commentaries that indicated which particular author he was making use of at any given point, but he restricted it to Ambrose, Augustine, Gregory the Great, and

Salvador-Bello, *Isidorean Perceptions of Order: The Exeter Book Riddles and Medieval Latin Enigmata* (Morgantown: 2015).

114 For Lutting, see Michael Lapidge, "The Earliest Anglo-Latin Poet: Lutting of Lindisfarne," *Anglo-Saxon England* 42 (2013), 1–26. For the other sources, see, for example, Walter Goffart, *The Narrators of Barbarian History* (*A.D. 550–800*)*: Jordanes, Gregory of Tours, Bede, and Paul the Deacon* (Princeton: 1988), 256–57.

115 Bertram Colgrave, ed. and trans., *Two Lives of Saint Cuthbert* (Cambridge: 1940), 331, and for comment Clare Stancliffe, "Disputed Episcopacy: Bede, Acca, and the Relationship between Stephen's *Life of St Wilfrid* and the Early Prose Lives of St Cuthbert," *Anglo-Saxon England* 41 (2012), 15–18. For use of Isidore in non-Northumbrian hagiography, see Claudia Di Sciacca, "Isidore of Seville in Anglo-Saxon England: The *Synonyma* as a Source of Felix's *Vita S. Guthlaci*," in, *Isidore of Seville* Fear and Wood.

116 Lapidge, *The Anglo-Saxon Library*, 212–15.

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Jerome.[117] Likewise, though Bede did cite Isidore directly—using *Etymologiae* 16.36.13, "A *cadus* is a Greek amphora containing three urns," to interpret Luke 16:6, for example[118]—he had a tendency to put Isidorian etymologies into his own words.[119] Secondly, though most of Bede's works are now available in modern editions the identification of the sources employed is often partial and incomplete. Fortunately, recent English translations of Bede's works offer more comprehensive lists. These demonstrate just how important Isidore was for Bede: he was the third most used author in *In principium Genesis*, after Augustine and Jerome, and the fourth in *In Ezram et Neemiam*, after Augustine, Gregory, and Jerome.[120]

Although Bede drew on Isidore throughout his writings, he was particularly indebted to him early in his career. Isidore's *De natura rerum* was one of the key inspirations behind two of Bede's early works—*De natura rerum* and *De temporibus*. Effectively, Bede separated off the opening chapters of Isidore's *De natura rerum* and expanded their scope—drawing in particular on material from the *Sirmond* collection—to produce *De temporibus*. For his *De natura rerum* Bede expanded material from the rest of Isidore's *De natura rerum*, adding information from Pliny and a number of other sources, while excising the more allegorical elements of the Spaniard's work.[121] *De temporibus* closes with a chronicle arranged according to the Six Ages of the World—the *Chronica minora*—for which Isidore's own *Chronica maiora* served as a key source. Bede does quote verbatim from Isidore's chronicle in the *Chronica minora* but tends to modify his source. In particular, Bede excised nearly all references to classical paganism and to secular philosophy.[122] For example:

117 Mark Stansbury, "Source-Marks in Bede's Biblical Commentaries," in *Northumbria's Golden Age*, eds. Jane Hawkes and Susan Mills (Stroud: 1999), 383–89.

118 "Cadus Graeca amphora est continens urnas tres," D. Hurst, ed., *Bedae Venerabilis Opera, Pars II Opera Exegetica: 3 In Lucae evangelium expositio, In Marci evangelium expositio*, CCSL 120 (Turnhout: 1960), 297.

119 M.L.W. Laistner, "The Library of the Venerable Bede," in *The Intellectual Heritage of the Early Middle Ages: Selected Essays by M.L.W. Laistner*, ed. Chester G. Starr (New York: 1983), 138.

120 Calvin B. Kendall, *Bede: On Genesis* (Liverpool: 2008), 355–59; Scott DeGregorio, *Bede: On Ezra and Nehemiah* (Liverpool: 2006), 258–60, as noted by Calvin B. Kendall and Faith Wallis, *Bede: On the Nature of Things and On Times* (Liverpool: 2010), 19.

121 Kendall and Wallis, *Bede: On the Nature of Things and On Times*, 12; the chapter by Faith Wallis in this volume on Isidore and science; Faith Wallis, "*Si Naturam Quæras*: Reframing Bede's 'Science,'" in *Innovation and Tradition in the Writings of the Venerable Bede*, ed. Scott DeGregorio (Morgantown: 2006), 65–99.

122 Jacques Elfassi, "L'occultation du paganisme dans la *Chronique Mineure* de Bède le Vénérable," in *Bède le Vénérable entre tradition et postérité*, eds. Stéphane Lebecq, Michael Perrin, and Olivier Szerwiniack (Lille: 2005), 66–69.

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> Bede, *De temporibus* 19: Picus first reigned over the Latins[123]
>
> Isidore, *Chronica maiora* 76: In this age Picus, who is said to have been the son of Saturn, first reigned over the Latins.[124]
>
> Bede, *De temporibus* 22: Gaius [Caligula] reigned for four years. Matthew wrote his Gospel[125]
>
> Isidore, *Chronica maiora* 240–41: Gauis Caligula reigned for four years. He was wild with greed, cruelty, and excess, and, elevating himself among the gods, ordered that a statue of Jupiter be set up in the Temple of Jerusalem under his name. At the same time, Matthew, the first Apostle, wrote his Gospel in Judea.[126]

Bede may have removed some of these references out of a desire for brevity—another thing he could have learned from Isidore.[127] That he was prepared to describe Thales as a physician but not Socrates as a philosopher suggests, however, more ideological motivations.[128]

What did Bede make of Isidore? Much turns on a letter written by Cuthbert, later abbot of Wearmouth-Jarrow, describing Bede's final days.[129] According to Cuthbert, Bede remained the solicitous teacher to the end:

> During those days there were two pieces of work worthy of record, besides the lessons which he gave us every day and his chanting of the Psalter, which he desired to finish: the gospel of St. John, which he was turning

123 "Primus latinis regnat picus," Charles W. Jones, ed., *Beda Venerabilis Opera Didascalia*, CCSL 123C (Turnhout: 1980), 603, Kendall and Wallis, *Bede: On the Nature of Things and On Times*, 121.

124 "Hac aetate primus regnat Latinis Picus, qui fertur fuisse Saturni filius," Theodor Mommsen, ed., *Chronica minora saec. IV. V. VI. VII.*, MGH AA 11 (Turnhout: 1894), 436.

125 "Gaius ann. iiii. Mattheus euangelium scribit," Jones, *Opera Didascalia*, 607, Kendall and Wallis, *Bede: On the Nature of Things and On Times*, 126.

126 "Gaius Caligula regnavit ann . IIII . Hic avaritia, crudelitate, et luxuria saevus fuit atque in deos se transferens in templo Hierusolymorum statuam Iovis sub nomine suo poni iussit. Per idem tempus Matthaeus apostolus euangelium in Iudaea primus scripsit," Mommsen, *Chronica minora*, 454.

127 Jamie Wood, "*Brevitas* in the Writings of Isidore of Seville," in *Early Medieval Spain: A Symposium*, eds. Alan Deyermond and Martin J. Ryan (London: 2010), 37–53.

128 Elfassi, "L'occultation du paganisme," 67.

129 Nicholas J. Higham, (*Re-*) *Reading Bede: The Ecclesiastical History in Context* (London: 2006), 16–20.

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> into our mother tongue to the great profit of the Church, from the beginning as far as the words "But what are they among so many?" *et de libris Rotarum* [i.e. *De natura rerum*] *Ysidori episcopi exceptiones quasdam*; for he said "I cannot have my children learning what is not true, and losing their labour on this after I am gone."[130]

What Bede was doing with or to Isidore's *De natura rerum* remains unclear. Was Bede producing corrections or emendations to Isidore's work, removing that which was not true so that his students would not be misled?[131] Such a reading accords well with the suspicion, long held by many scholars, that Bede did not altogether approve of Isidore and was sceptical of the merits of his work. Though early in his career Bede had been indebted to Isidore, in his maturity he grew wary of Isidore's errors and tried to call out mistakes where he could.[132]

However, recent work suggests this supposed hostility has been overplayed. Returning to an earlier scholarly position, McCready argued that Cuthbert's letter should be read as a describing a dying Bede compiling extracts from *De natura rerum*—and, possibly, translating them.[133] Perhaps the results would have resembled the glossed epitomes of the *Etymologiae* discussed above. Nor was Isidore the only author whose errors were called out by Bede—Jerome was similarly criticised on occasion.[134] As Kendall and Wallis suggest, it was not that Bede was especially critical of Isidore in his later years, rather that in his maturity "he had enough experience to realise the greatest doctors were fallible [...] and [must be] corrected when shown to be wrong."[135] This reassessment accords well with changing scholarly attitudes towards Bede. He is no

130 "In istis autem diebus duo opuscula multum memoria digna, exceptis lectionibus quas cotidie accepimus ab eo et cantu Psalmorum, facere studuit, id est a capite euangelii sancti Iohannis usque ad eum locum in quo dicitur 'Sed haec quid sunt inter tantos?' in nostram linguam ad utilitatem ecclesiae Dei conuertit, et de libris Rotarum Ysidori episcopi exceptiones quasdam, dicens 'Nolo ut pueri mei mendacium legant, et in hoc post meum obitum sine fructu laborent,'" Colgrave and Mynors, *Bede's Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, 582–83.

131 For example, Paul Meyvaert, "Bede the Scholar," in *Famulus Christi: Essays in Commemoration of the Thirteenth Centenary of the Birth of the Venerable Bede*, ed. Gerald Bonner (London: 1976), 59. For discussion of the different interpretations of this passage, see Kendall and Wallis, *Bede: On the Nature of Things and On Times*, 16–19.

132 Meyvaert, "Bede the Scholar," 58.

133 William D. McCready, "Bede, Isidore, and the *Epistola Cuthberti*," *Traditio* 50 (1995), 87–93.

134 Kendall and Wallis, *Bede: On the Nature of Things and On Times*, 13–16.

135 Kendall and Wallis, *Bede: On the Nature of Things and On Times*, 14. See also the chapter by Faith Wallis in this volume.

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longer seen simply as the humble transmitter of Patristic wisdom but as a scholar confident in his own abilities and, by his later years, secure in his own authority.[136]

If it remains uncertain what Bede was doing on his deathbed, the import of Cuthbert's letter is clear. Bede could not ignore Isidore; even as he was dying, he had to engage with Isidore's scholarship—whether to correct it or to make excerpts from it. That Bede was making a translation from the Gospel of John at the same time only serves to underline Isidore's importance.

4 Conclusion

The question of what British and Irish authors gained from the encyclopaedic writings of Isidore of Seville answers itself. His works put them in touch with wider worlds—cultural, historical, and geographical. He could act as a bridge between the ancient, classical past and the medieval, Christian present, between the Mediterranean Sea and the islands of the Northern Ocean. To those grappling with the alien lands and customs of the Bible, Isidore could act as a guide. His writings could likewise unlock complex and intractable texts and show how meaning could spring forth from words when their origins and derivations were understood.[137] But Isidore's writings provided more than just information. Works such as the *Etymologiae* and the *Synonyma* offered up new linguistic possibilities to receptive audiences. Whatever one makes of the word play of Virgilius and the Faminators or the complex, interlaced periods of Aldhelm's prose, they were the product of minds that delighted in the potentials of language, that felt keenly "the allure of Latin when newly learned."[138]

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137 See the chapters by Thomas O'Loughlin, José Carracedo, and Jacques Elfassi in this volume for detailed comment on Isidore's contributions to these areas.

138 The phrase is from Howe, "Aldhelm's *Enigmata*," 58.

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CHAPTER 16

Isidore of Seville and the Formation of Medieval Computus

Immo Warntjes

1 Introduction

Isidore of Seville holds a prominent place in the history of Western science. Roman science had been based on Greek authorities.[1] With the fall of the Western Roman Empire in the 5th century came the loss of Greek language skills. Key scientific texts, like Ptolemy's *Almagest* for astronomy and Euclid's *Elements* for mathematics, only became available to the Latin West through translations from Arabic or the original Greek in what is termed the Renaissance of the 12th century.[2] Boethius, advisor to the Ostrogothic King Theoderic in Ravenna in the early 6th century, tried to salvage as much Greek learning as possible (particularly in mathematics, music, and philosophy), but his effort was cut short by the wrath of the king, who sentenced him to death for high treason in AD 524.[3] His *mathematica* started to flourish in what became known as the Carolingian Renaissance in the 9th century, as did more philosophical works by Martianus Capella, Macrobius, Calcidius, and others, which included many thought-provoking scientific ideas.[4] The intervening period, the 7th and 8th centuries, was strongly influenced (though not dominated) by Isidorian thought.

1 See the classic by William H. Stahl, *Roman science: Origins, development, and influence to the later Middle Ages* (Madison: 1962).

2 Charles Homer Haskins, *The Renaissance of the 12th century* (Cambridge: 1927), and his more detailed studies assembled in *Studies in the history of mediaeval science* (Cambridge: 1924).

3 On Boethius, see recently John Moorhead, "Boethius' life and the world of late antique philosophy," in *The Cambridge companion to Boethius*, ed. John Marenbon (Cambridge: 2009), 13–33. For his oeuvre, see Philip Edward Phillips, "Anicius Manlius Severinus Boethius: a chronology and selected annotated bibliography," in *A companion to Boethius in the Middle Ages*, eds. Noel Harold Kaylor and Dario Brancato (Leiden: 2012), 551–90. An excellent overview is provided by Dirk Kurt Kranz, "Boethius, Anicius Manlius Severinus," *Biographisch-bibliographisches Kirchenlexikon* 24 (2005), 259–310.

4 For the Carolingian reception of the scientific ideas incorporated in these late antique philosophical texts, see especially Bruce S. Eastwood, *Ordering the heavens: Roman astronomy and cosmology in the Carolingian Renaissance* (Leiden: 2007).

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The western Mediterranean of the 6th and early 7th centuries can well be characterised by Huizinga's famous term as the "autumn" of late classical culture,[5] and, conversely, less so as the spring or awakening of a distinctively medieval approach to learning (this attribute is most appropriately given to 7th-century insular, if not Irish, culture). This is best illustrated by the cases of Cassiodorus and Isidore, who served as *lapides angulares*, as cornerstones between old Roman and new Christian science. Cassiodorus was a contemporary of Boethius but was more diplomatic in his political dealings, serving as a high-ranking official both Theorderic and his grandson Athalaric. After a long spell in Constantinople, he retired to his famous foundation, the monastery of Vivarium in Calabria.[6] There, he wrote his famous *Institutiones*, a guide to what he considered proper monastic behaviour and education.[7] Tellingly, the second book, on monastic education, followed closely the very recent concept of the *septem artes liberales*, popularised by Martianus Capella. These seven liberal arts included arithmetic, music, geometry, and astronomy in its scientific strand, the *quadrivium*. Interestingly, in four, principally early, manuscripts of the *Institutiones*, a short text entitled *Computus paschalis* is added to the *quadrivium*.[8] This tract consists of nine formulae for the determination of calendrical data essential for the calculation of the most important Christian feast, Easter. The nine formulae in question had been translated by Dionysius Exiguus, a contemporary and friend of Cassiodorus, from Greek into Latin in AD 525 and they were adapted to the year AD 562 in Cassiodorus's circle.[9] While the *quadrivium* remained a rather hollow, purely theoretical educational

5 Johan Huizinga, *Herfsttij der Middeleeuwen* (Haarlem: 1919); English translations by Frederik J. Hopman as *The waning of the Middle Ages* (London: 1924), and by Rodney J. Payton as *The autumn of the Middle Ages* (Chicago: 1996).

6 On Cassiodorus, see recently M. Shane Bjornlie, *Politics and tradition between Rome, Ravenna and Constantinople: A study of Cassiodorus and the Variae, 527–554* (Cambridge: 2013). On his oeuvre, see still the classic by André van de Vyver, "Cassiodore et son oeuvre," *Speculum* 6 (1931), 244–92.

7 Cassiodorus, *Institutiones*: Wolfgang Bürsgens, ed., *Cassiodor: Institutiones divinarum et saecularium litterarum. Einführung in die geistlichen und weltlichen Wissenschaften*, 2 vols (Freiburg: 2003).

8 Cassiodorus, *Computus paschalis*, ed. Paul Lehmann, "Cassiodorstudien I," *Philologus* 71 (1912), 278–99. The three early manuscripts of the tract are: Würzburg UB M.p.misc.f.5a, 30v-31v (south-west Germany?, scriptorium with insular connections, *saec.* VIII^{ex}); Karlsruhe BLB Aug. perg. 171, 49v-50v (western Germany?, *saec.* IX$^{2/3}$); Paris BnF Lat. 2200, 70v-72v (?; *saec.* IX).

9 For the literary context of Cassiodorus's *Computus paschalis*, see Immo Warntjes, "The *Argumenta* of Dionysius Exiguus and their early recensions," in *Computus and its cultural context in the Latin West*, eds. Immo Warntjes and Dáibhí Ó Cróinín (Turnhout: 2010), 67–68. See also

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concept, at least until the mid-9th century, computus soon flourished to become the only applied science of Western Europe. Cassiodorus intentionally paved the way for monasteries to act as the new educational centres, and unintentionally for computus to establish itself as their principal scientific subject.

Isidore's case is very similar; he belonged to the same tradition. The exception is his *De natura rerum*, which should be considered as the origin of Christian cosmology; but even here the novelty lay not in creating a new genre, but rather in turning a pagan tradition Christian.[10] In his 20-book *Etymologiae*, Isidore followed more traditional patterns. The first three books outline, in almost the same order, the seven liberal arts of Cassiodorus's *Institutiones*.[11] Isidore adds to these medicine, law, and chronography in books 4 and 5. From book 6 he turned to Christianity proper, with a section on Easter (*De ciclo pascali*) as Chapter 17 of this book. Here, in his treatment of Easter, Isidore provided the exact opposite to Cassidorus: Isidore was interested in the definition of key terms and concepts, not in the actual application of algorithms. Still, Isidore started his project within the *c.*200-year-old framework of the *artes liberales* (first initiated by authors like Martianus Capella in the 5th century), but he moved on to include computus, the science of calculating Easter, as an integral part of his discussion.[12] Computus developed from a side-note of Cassiodorus' *Institutiones* to an important and integral element in Isidore's *Etymologiae*.

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the rather problematic study by Otto Neugebauer, "On the Computus paschalis of 'Cassiodorus,'" *Centaurus* 25 (1982), 292–302.

10 See Faith Wallis's chapter in the present volume. Isidore, *De natura rerum*: Jacques Fontaine, ed., *Isidore de Séville: Traité de la nature* (Bordeaux: 1960); for English translation, see Calvin B. Kendall and Faith Wallis, *Isidore of Seville: On the nature of things* (Liverpool: 2016).

11 On Isidore's dependency on Cassidorus, see Paul Lehmann, "Cassiodorstudien II," *Philologus* 72 (1913), 503–17. See also the new editions of books 2 and 3 of the *Etymologiae* among the Auteurs latins du moyen âge series: Peter K. Marshall, ed., *Isidore of Seville, Etymologies, Book II: Rhetoric* (Paris: 1983); Giovanni Gasparotto and Jean-Yves Guillaumin, eds., *Isidore de Séville, Étymologies, Livre III: De mathematica* (Paris: 2009). On broader conceptual differences between Cassiodorus's *Institutiones* and Isidore's *Etymologiae*, see Jacques Fontaine, "Cassiodore et Isidore: l'évolution de l'encyclopédisme latin du VIe au VIIe siècle," *Settimane di Studio* 32 (1986), 72–91.

12 Brigitte Englisch, *Die artes liberales im frühen Mittelalter* (*5.–9. Jh.*) (Stuttgart: 1994), tries to define the inclusion of the computus in the traditional concept of the *artes liberales*, but underestimates Isidore's role by neglecting Irish texts in favour of Bede.

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2 Isidore as a Calendrical Scientist (*Etym.* 6.17 and Isidore's Easter Table)

Because of Isidore's principal preoccupation with collecting knowledge rather than engaging in its actual application, it is not straightforward to establish how good a scientist, especially in calendrical terms (the focus of this study), he was himself. The key witness in this respect is the Easter table outlined in *Etymologiae* 6.17. This has puzzled scholars at least since the 18th century.[13]

Continental Europe, in the early Middle Ages, principally knew two different ways of calculating the most important Christian feast, Easter.[14] The first, by Victorius of Aquitaine in AD 457,[15] was commissioned by the papal curia following substantial debate under Pope Leo I. This Roman reckoning competed with one devised in Alexandria, the centre of late antique learning, scientific and otherwise, around the end of the 3rd century. When this Greek reckoning was translated into Latin, again on papal initiative, by Dionysius Exiguus in AD 525,[16] conflict ensued which was resolved only in Charlemagne's day around AD 800. The debate was at its height in Visigothic Spain in Isidore's day.[17] Isidore followed the Alexandrian system, and in his writings there is only

13 Johannes van der Hagen, *Observationes in veterum partum et pontificum prologos et epistolas paschales, aliosque antiquos de ratione paschali scriptores* (Amsterdam: 1734), 241.

14 I am excluding here the so-called *latercus*, the 84-year Easter cycle with 14-year *saltus* followed in the insular world, because it had no significance for Isidore. For this Easter reckoning, see especially Daniel Mc Carthy, "Easter principles and a fifth-century lunar cycle used in the British Isles," *Journal for the history of astronomy* 24 (1993), 204–24; Bonnie Blackburn and Leofranc Holford-Strevens, *The Oxford companion to the year* (Oxford: 1999), 870–75.

15 Victorius's Prologue and Easter table: Bruno Krusch, ed., "Studien zur christlich-mittelalterlichen Chronologie: die Entstehung unserer heutigen Zeitrechnung," *Abhandlungen der Preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, Jahrgang 1937, philosophisch-historische Klasse, Nr. 8* (1938), 4–52.

16 Dionysius's Latin translation of the Alexandrian Easter reckoning (consisting of two letters, an Easter table, and the *Argumenta*): Wilhelm Jan, ed., *Historia cycli dionysiani cum argumentis paschalibus et aliis eo spectantibus* (Wittenberg: 1718) (reprinted in PL 67: 453–520); Krusch, "Studien," 59–86.

17 The key documents for the Easter question in Isidore's time were Leo the monk, *Epistola ad Sesuldum* (Bruno Krusch, ed., *Studien zur christlich-mittelalterlichen Chronologie: der 84jährige Ostercyclus und seine Quellen* [Leipzig: 1880], 298–302); and Braulio of Zaragoza, *Epistola ad Eutropium* (= *Epistola* 22: Luis Riesco Terrero, ed., *Epistolario de San Braulio: Introducción, edición crítica y traducción* [Seville: 1975], 114–17). For Braulio's letter see Mario Ruffini, "Il computo della Pasqua nell'epistola XXII di San Braulio," *Anales Toledanos* 3 (1971), 277–91. A second manuscript of Leo the monk's letter has only recently been discovered: Immo Warntjes, "A newly discovered prologue of AD 699 to the Easter table of Victorius of Aquitaine in an unknown Sirmond manuscript," *Peritia* 21 (2010), 259. A new

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the slightest trace of its Victorian rival. But from where did Isidore receive his information about the Alexandrian method?

Isidore worked from a variety of sources, more than the most recent edition of book 6 of the *Etymologiae* indicates.[18] He certainly knew the *Epistola Pascasini*, a response by Bishop Paschasinus of Lilybaeum in Sicily to Pope Leo I's enquiry about the controversial Easter of AD 444;[19] Archdeacon/Pope Hilarus's letter to Victorius of Aquitaine, urging him, in the aftermath of the problematic Easter of AD 455, to reconcile Roman with Alexandrian practices; Victorius's response, also in letter format, which served as a prologue to the new Easter table he designed; the *Prologus Cyrilli*, a text promoting the Alexandrian reckoning, but evidently written later than Cyril of Alexandria's lifetime (†AD 444), presumably in the late 5th century; and the *Epistola Cyrilli*, which is based on an orginal work by the bishop of Alexandria but, in the main part, was composed in AD 607.

More important for the present study is that Isidore knew Dionysius's works, especially his two letters, to Petronius on the one hand, and Boniface and Bonus on the other. But there is no indication that Isidore had Dionysius's *Argumenta* and Easter table at hand. Similar to his approach in book 3 on mathematics, Isidore does not record, cite, or even refer to a single calendrical algorithm. Among the list of authorities credited with the composition of an Easter table (*Etym*. 6.17.1–2), namely Hippolytus of Rome, Eusebius of Ceasarea, Prosper and Victorius of Aquitaine, and Theophilus and Cyril of Alexandria, Dionysius is tellingly absent.[20] And Isidore's Easter table differed markedly from the Dionysiac model. It appears that Dionysius and Isidore (or rather

edition and detailed analysis of the text has just appeared: José Carlos Martín-Iglesias, "La Epistola de compvto paschali (CPL 2300) del monje León; nueva edición y estudio de una obra probablemente hispano-visigoda," *Revista di cultura classica e medioevale* 61 (2019), 205–39. A full-scale study of the Visigothic Easter controversy is a major desideratum. Outdated, but still useful, are Bruno Krusch, "Die Einführung des griechischen Paschalritus im Abendlande," *Neues Archiv der Gesellschaft für ältere deutsche Geschichtskunde* 9 (1884), 115–22; Joseph Schmid, *Die Osterfestberechnung in der abendländischen Kirche* (Freiburg: 1907), 88–102. See also Charles W. Jones, *Bedae opera de temporibus* (Cambridge: 1943), 34–53, and pp. 509–11 below.

18 Isidore, *Etymologiae* 6.17: César Chaparro Gómez, ed., *Isidoro de Sevilla, Etimologías, Libro VI: De las Sagradas Escrituras* (Paris: 2012), 86–111 (edition and Spanish translation), 188–94 (notes), xix-xxiv (discussion of sources). All quotes from *Etymologiae* 6.17 are from this edition.

19 Isidore also cites the *Epistola Pascasini* prominently *De viris illustribus* 11, Carmen Codoñer, ed., *El De viris illustribus de Isidoro de Sevilla: studio y edición crítica* (Salamanca: 1964), 140.

20 Dionysius is explicitly mentioned in a similar list in Braulio's letter to Eutropius of only a few years later; Riesco Terrero, *Epistolario*, 114.

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their immediate sources) worked independently from the same or a similar Greek model, like Cyril of Alexandria's Easter table.[21]

Like Cyril's Easter table, the one included by Isidore in his *Etymologiae* covered a period of 95 years. Isidore considered this a true cycle, though the Alexandrian reckoning is cyclic only after 532 years, a clear indication that Isidore's understanding of matters computistical was quite limited.[22] This leads into the most controversial aspect of Isidore's table: which 95-year period was it supposed to cover? Cyril of Alexandria's Easter table was composed for the period AD 437–531. Dionyisus's table (or its model) continued this to AD 532–626. A certain Felix, like Dionysius working in Italy, provided the next extension, AD 627–721.[23] Isidore compiled his *Etymologiae* in various stages over a considerable period of time. With his death in AD 636, the Easter table may have been produced before or after the chronological watershed of AD 627.

In his still unsurpassed "Die Einführung des griechischen Paschalritus im Abendland" of 1884, Bruno Krusch proved that Isidore simply copied an existing table for the years AD 532–626.[24] In the new 2012 edition of book 6 of the *Etymologiae*, César Chaparro Gómez simply worked on the assumption that Isidore copied his information from Dionysius's Easter table of AD 532–626, neglecting the manuscript witnesses in this instance.[25] When the earliest manuscripts are examined, a fairly complex picture emerges, which provides a wonderful and unique insight into the transmission history of the *Etymologiae*. In fact, Isidore's chapter on Easter appears to be the most indicative for analysing the various transmission stages of this work, because later copyists felt the need to update the table to represent their time of writing. A detailed study of

21 Isidore, *Etymologiae* 6.17.2, is explicit that Cyril of Alexandria was his ultimate source: "Cuius quidem rationem beatissimus Cyrillus Alexandriae urbis episcopus in nonaginta quinque annos per quinquies decem novies calculans, quoto Kal. vel luna debeat paschalis sollemnitas celebrari, summa brevitate notavit."

22 Isidore, *Etymologiae* 6.17.9: "post cuius expletionem ad primum exordium recurrendum."

23 For edition of Felix's text, see Krusch, "Studien," 86–87. Most recently, see Luciana Cuppo, "Felix of Squillace and the Dionysiac computus I: Bobbio and Northern Italy (MS Ambrosiana H 150 inf.)," in *The Easter controversy of Late Antiquity and the early Middle Ages*, eds. Immo Warntjes and Dáibhí Ó Cróinín (Turnhout: 2011), 110–36.

24 Krusch, "Die Einführung," 117–18.

25 Chaparro Gómez, *Isidoro de Sevilla, Etimologías, Libro VI*, 189: "Esta largo cuadro de los cinco ciclos de diecinueve años ha sido tomado por Isidoro de Dionys. Exig. pasch. (ML 67, 493 ss.). Está copiado al pie de la letra y, por ello, nos ha servido para corregor las defectuosas lecturas que dieron Arévalo, Lindsay y los posteriores traductores de este libro. Lo que sucede es Isidoro sólo copió una parte del cuadro general de Dionisio, por lo que puede resultar ininteligible. Los errores en los manuscritos son múltiples y algunos ni siquiera aportan dicho calendario."

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the Easter table in the earliest manuscripts of the *Etymologiae* will appear elsewhere.[26] It will suffice here to summarise the tentative results of that study:

1. Isidore included in his *Etymologiae* an Alexandrian Easter table covering the years AD 532–626. He did not work from Dionysius's model, but rather used a Greek or Latin source available in the Iberian Peninsula. One of the characteristic features of Isidore's table seems to have been an unusual sequence of common and embolismic years, reversing the order of common and embolismic years in the 16th and 17th years; since this effectively changes the structure of the 19-year cycle from the Alexandrian 8 + 11 years (*ogdoas* + *hendecas*) to two 8-year periods and one of 3 years, this hints at a Latin model.[27]
2. In the years AD 627–45, Isidore's Easter table was updated so that the first 19-year cycle covered the contemporary period AD 627–45; the remaining second to fifth 19-year cycles remained unchanged. This update may be attributed to Braulio of Zaragoza.
3. Outside of the *Etymologiae* but in Visigothic Spain, the Alexandrian Easter table of AD 532–626 was updated to the subsequent 95-year period, AD 627–721; this updated table was included in the *Etymologiae* slightly later in a rare recension transmitted through Irish channels. The update may be dated to AD 632, its inclusion to AD 655.
4. Close to the end of the 95-year period of AD 627–721, the note *A conditione mundi usque ad hunc nouissimum ciclum computantur anni* ⅴDCCCCXX was included in some recensions of the *Etymologiae*. It refers to the year AM 5920 = AD 722.
5. In the period AD 779–97, Isidore's table in the *Etymologiae* was updated to the 95-year period AD 779–873. This should be connected to the Carolingian educational reforms which accepted and promoted computus as the ultimate science. Towards the end of this period, in the final 19-year cycle of AD 855–73, this table was revised by replacing Isidore's outdated sequence of bissextile years with the correct list for these final 19 years.
6. A thorough investigation of Isidore's Easter table in all 8th- to 10th-century codices of the *Etymologiae* will doubtlessly reveal many more

26 See n. 141.

27 The 8-year cycle underlies the Easter table of Hyppolitus, whose 112-year table consists of five 16 (2 × 8)-year periods; cf. Eduard Schwartz, "Christliche und jüdische Ostertafeln," *Abhandlungen der Königlichen Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften zu Göttingen, philologisch-historische Klasse, Band 8, Nr. 6* (1905), 29–36; Alden A. Mosshammer, *The Easter computus and the origins of the Christian era* (Oxford: 2008), 116–23. The 8-year period was well known through the writings of Quintus Julius Hilarianus's *Expositum de die paschae et mensis* (PL 13, 1105–14: 113).

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stages in the transmission of this text. For the table proper and its development, it will be key to include the transmission independent of the *Etymologiae*. An interesting case in this respect is the Isidorian Easter table in the famous computistical manuscript Milan BA H 150 inf., known as the Bobbio Computus.[28] The data presented match the period AD 798–892.[29] Since, again, this table is not a direct continuation of Isidore's original table (which would be AD 626–721, 722–816, 817–912), it was quite certainly composed during its first 19-year cycle, AD 798–816. This fits nicely the date of composition of the codex itself. Since the first two decades of the 9th century marked a high point in the Carolingian study of computus, an update of Isidore's table at around this time is to be expected.

3 The Formation of Computus—Isidore in Britain and Ireland (Computistical Textbook)

Isidore was deeply steeped in late antique tradition. In educational terms, the late antique approach to learning (most prominently, but not solely, represented by the *artes liberales*), which still informed the bishop of Seville's thinking, was soon replaced by a vibrant intellectual endeavour under a Christian umbrella, fostered by the rapidly spreading monasteries. While Late Antiquity was drawing to its close in the Iberian Peninsula and Italy, early medieval monastic culture rose in the insular world (Ireland and Britain). Here, learning focused on God's word and work, the principal objective being to understand the written truth and the cosmos. Latin grammar and exegesis became the core subjects, Priscian and Donatus, Jerome and Augustine the essential readings.[30] But these subjects only covered an understanding of the Bible, not of God's creation. A new subject had to be created, which became known by the term "computus." Its core component was the organisation of the liturgical calendar, which was determined by the date of Easter. Easter itself was fixed on the first Sunday after the first full moon after the spring equinox. Thus, the tropical year and the synodic lunar month needed to be modelled mathematically, which

28 Milan BA H 150 inf., 108r–109r (Bobbio, early 9th century).

29 Cuppo, "Felix of Squillace," 133–36, published this table, indicating that it covers the equivalent 95-year periods AD 608–702, 703–97, 798–892. This is obviously not correct, as the table is not cyclic; the data match only the period AD 798–892.

30 See the chapter by José Carracedo Fraga in this volume.

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was done in the form of the Julian calendar and a 19-year lunar cycle. This focus on the sun and the moon opened computus up to other phenomena connected to the heavenly bodies, and ultimately to all key components necessary to understand God's creation as manifested in the cosmos. The core of computus was therefore calendrical calculations, astronomy and arithmetic its auxiliary sciences, contemplation about God's work its ultimate aim.

As outlined above, calendrical science certainly was not Isidore's main area of interest or expertise. How little did he know, yet he would become one of the founding fathers of computus! As this subject was a new, 7th-century invention, there were no models, no textbooks available. There simply was no Donatus or Priscian for computus. But there was a constant supply of texts from the Iberian Peninsula to Ireland, which brought fundamental works to the insular world. Two channels of transmission were vitally important: (1) the Isidorian material, and (2) the so-called Sirmond group of texts.[31] When exactly Isidore's *Etymologiae* arrived in Ireland, and in what state (i.e. the full text or only selected books), remains a matter of debate.[32] Certainly, in the second half of the 7th century (whether early or late depends on interpretation) Irish monks actively engaged in a thorough study of the *Etymologiae*. Which parts of the text could be extracted and pasted together as a substitute for the missing computistical textbook?

The obvious choice would have been to combine the second part of book 5, *De temporibus*,[33] with 6.17, *De ciclo paschali*. But some of the material in the

31 See p. 477 below.

32 The oldest manuscript witnesses of the *Etymologiae* in Ireland are the famous St Gall fragments, originally binding supports to the codices 150 and 267 of the Stiftsbibliothek. They are from book 11 and date to the mid-7th century, Alban Dold and Johannes Duft, *Die älteste irische Handschriften-Reliquie der Stiftsbiblothek St. Gallen mit Texten aus Isidors Etymologien* (Beuron: 1955). More generally, see A.E. Anspach, "Das Fortleben Isidors im VII. bis IX. Jahrhundert," in *Miscellanea Isidoriana* (Rome: 1936), 327–29, 337–38; Bernhard Bischoff, "Die europäische Verbreitung der Werke Isidors von Sevilla," *Isidoriana* (León: 1961), 317–44; Bengt Löfstedt, *Der hibernolateinische Grammatiker Malsachanus* (Uppsala: 1965), 50–51; Marina Smyth, "Isidore of Seville and early Irish cosmography," *Cambridge Medieval Celtic Studies* 14 (1987), 69–102; Michael W. Herren, "On the earliest Irish acquaintance with Isidore of Seville," in *Visigothic Spain: new approaches*, ed. Edward James (Oxford: 1980), 243–50. The evidence for the earliest reception of Isidore in Ireland and its literature is now conveniently listed by Donnchadh Ó Corráin, *Clavis litterarum Hibernensium: medieval Irish books and texts* (*c. 400–c. 1500*), 3 vols (Turnhout: 2017), 237–40, 495–96.

33 In the following section, the most recent edition of book 5 of the *Etymologiae* is used: Valeriano Yarza Urquiola and Francisca Javier Andrés Santos, eds., *Isidoro de Sevilla, Etimologías, Libro V: De legibus—De temporibus* (Paris: 2013).

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astronomy section of book 3 (*De astronomia*)[34] and book 13 on cosmology[35] also contained relevant information for computistical theory. Traces of this, no doubt, 7th-century endeavour to systematise Isidorian thought into a textbook on time-reckoning can be found in 8th- and 9th-century computistical manuscripts (all, it will be noted, with evident insular connections). One of the prime witnesses is Berlin SBPK Phillipps 1831.[36] In effect, this codex is a collection of key computistical textbooks available at the time of production, around AD 800. It contains Bede's *De temporibus* of AD 703 and *De temporum ratione* of AD 725, the Neustrian Dialogue of AD 737, the Computus of AD 757, and the *Libellus annalis* of AD 793. Sandwiched in this collection are the astronomical section of book 3 of Isidore's *Etymologiae* and book 13 on cosmology, successively.[37]

More comprehensive and more focussed on calendrical science is a collection of Isidorian excerpts in the 10th-century codex Paris BnF Lat. 5239. It consists of Isidore's sections *De temporibus* (*Etym*. 5.28–39, i.e. including the chronicle), *De astronomia* (*Etym.* 3.23–70), and on cosmology (*Etym*. 13), in this order.[38] This collection of Isidorian excerpts also sheds more light on the curious fact that in the Berlin codex the table of contents of *De temporibus* is directly followed by the text of *De astronomia*.[39] Evidently, the copyist omitted, for whatever reason, the entire text of *De temporibus* of his source. Therefore, both manuscripts bear witness to the construction of a textbook on the reckoning of time from *Etymologiae* 5.28–39, 3.23–70, and 13.[40]

34 The chapter numbering of Gasparotto and Guillaumin, *Isidore de Séville, Étymologies, Livre III*, differs from Lindsay's (i.e. *Etym*. 3.23–70, Gasparro and Guillaumin, eds. = *Etym*. 3.24–71, Lindsay, ed.).

35 Giovanni Gasparotto, ed., *Isidoro di Siviglia, Etimologie, Libro XIII: De mundo et partibus* (Paris: 2004).

36 For the importance for the reconstruction of Isidore's text of this and other early manuscripts containing excerpts of the *Etymologiae*, see W.M. Lindsay, "The editing of Isidore *Etymologiae*," *Classical Quarterly* 5 (1911), 46.

37 Berlin SBPK Phillipps 1831, 107r-115v (Verona, *saec*. IX^{inf}). On fol. 107r, the table of contents for book 5 of *Etym.* is outlined; the following text, however, is *Etym*. 3.24–70; see Valentin Rose, *Verzeichnis der lateinischen Handschriften der Königlichen Bibliothek zu Berlin,* vol. 1: *Die Meermann-Handschriften des Sir Thomas Phillipps* (Berlin: 1893), 282. Note that *De astronomia* (*Etym*. 3.23–70) on its own can more frequently be found in 9th-century manuscripts; cf. Bern BB 207, 189r-194v (Fleury?, *c*.AD 800?; available online at: http://www.e-codices.unifr.ch/de/list/one/bbb/0207); 417, 34r-44v (Fleury?, AD 826?).

38 Paris BnF Lat. 5239 (Limoges, *saec*. X$^{1/3}$), 145r-162r.

39 See n. 37 above.

40 Note that in some manuscripts of the *Etymologiae*, *De astronomia* (*Etym*. 3.21–70) is followed by Isidore's *De natura rerum* and *De temporibus* (*Etym*. 5.28–39). For this so-called 9th-century "Zopfingen metamorphosis," see Kendall and Wallis, *Isidore of Seville, On the*

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Curiously, however, the core of any computistical work, a discussion of the calculation of Easter, is missing. The 9th-century codex Paris BnF Lat. 5543 may provide the missing link here.[41] It is closely related to the just discussed manuscript BnF Lat. 5239. Thus, one would expect both codices to transmit the same Isidorian excerpts. Compared to BnF Lat. 5239, BnF Lat. 5543 likewise produces Isidore's *De temporibus* (*Etym*. 5.28–39) and *De astronomia* (*Etym*. 3.23–70) in this order, but does not include book 13 of the *Etymologiae* on cosmology.[42] The reason for this is immediately apparent: the text breaks off abruptly at *Etym*. 3.70.20 (… *Nam interdum in austrum*) at the end of the page, followed by a beautifully illustrated pseudo-Bede *De signis coeli*.[43] Clearly, pseudo-Bede replaced the end of the Isidorian excerpts of BnF Lat. 5543's exemplar, which is more faithfully preserved in BnF Lat. 5239. On the other hand, in BnF Lat. 5543 a substantial excerpt of *Etym*. 6.17(.1–20) can be found, which is separated from the other parts of the *Etymologiae* by 9th-century verses on the Julian calendar months and the zodiac signs, plus an excerpt from the 9th-century pseudo-Bede *De arithmeticis propositionibus*.[44] It may well be that these verses and pseudo-Bede were introduced by the 9th-century compiler to replace what originally was *Etym*. 6.17.21–32. If so, Paris BnF Lat. 5543 and 5239 combined may provide evidence for an earlier composition of all excerpts of the *Etymologiae* relevant for time-reckoning, in this order: *Etym*. 6.17 (*De ciclo paschali*), 5.28–39 (*De temporibus*), 3.23–70 (*De astronomia*), 13 (*De mundo et partibus*).

Our best witness, however, is the famous Bobbio Computus (Milan BA H 150 inf.), a compilation of computistical knowledge of the 4th to the early 9th centuries, assembled in Bobbio in the AD 810s on the basis of material collected through Irish, Anglo-Saxon, Frankish, and Italian channels. On folios 107v-124v,

nature of things, 40–41, 60–63. To the manuscripts listed there can be added Wolfenbüttel HAB Cod. Guelf. 2 Weiss., Hans Butzmann, *Die Weissenburger Handschriften* (Frankfurt: 1964), 86–87.

41 Paris BnF Lat. 5543, 144v-146r, 147v–157v (Fleury?, AD 847?; available online at: http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b10502052p.r=5543?rk=64378;0).

42 Note that the related codex London BL Harley 3017, 75v-86r, 102r-109r, transmits Isidore's *De astronomia* (*Etym*. 3.23–70) and *De temporibus* (*Etym*. 5.28–39.1). Though these two excerpts are not in successive order here, they may well have been originally, with later additions separating them in this later copy. Harley 3017 also includes Isidore's Easter table updated to AD 627–721, which is closely related to Paris BnF Lat. 5543 (cf. p. 507 below).

43 For pseudo-Bede *De signis coeli*, see Charles W. Jones, *Bedae pseudepigrapha: scientific writings falsely attributed to Bede* (Ithaca: 1939), 87.

44 Ps-Bede, *De arithmeticis propositionibus*: Menso Folkerts, ed., "Pseudo-Beda, De arithmeticis propositionibus: eine mathematische Schrift aus der Karolingerzeit," *Sudhoffs Archiv* 56 (1972), 22–43.

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it transmits successively *Etym*. 6.17 (*De ciclo paschali*), 5.28–38 (*De temporibus*, without the chronicle), and 3.23–70 (*De astronomia*). This compilation of excerpts from the *Etymologiae* focuses more strongly on computistics proper, not including book 13 on cosmology. Considering the content of the earliest Irish textbooks and Bede, this is what one would expect, as cosmology was treated by these authors as a separate discipline (though Isidore's *De natura rerum* is copied later in the Bobbio Computus and may have been connected to these excerpts originally).

But where was this compilation of Isidorian excerpts first produced? Both the Bobbio Computus and the two Paris manuscripts provide valuable clues. In the Bobbio Computus, the Isidorian excerpts form an integral part of a section of Sirmond material. As will be seen,[45] the Sirmond material was evidently available in Ireland from the AD 630s, and a major compilation of such texts was produced in the border region between Munster and Leinster in AD 658. In the Bobbio Computus, the Isidorian Easter table is updated to AD 798–892 (i.e. the time of compilation of this manuscript),[46] and the Victorian computistica immediately following the Isidorian excerpts include a *summa annorum* of AD 672 written in Burgundy.[47] This suggests that this group of texts, including the Isidorian excerpts, were first compiled in Ireland around AD 660, updated in Burgundy in AD 672, and included in this major computistical codex in Bobbio in the AD 810s.

The two Paris codices originate from mid-9th-century Fleury or the Loire Valley more generally, an area highly influenced by Irish intellectual thought at this time. More definite proof comes from a fragment of the *Etymologiae* in Irish script discovered by James Carley in Longleat House, Marquess of Bath, NMR 10589. Its Easter table suggests a close relationship to the Fleury excerpts.[48] The Longleat House fragment, however, covers *Etym*. 6.16.6–17.9, 7.1.29–38. Thus, it is not a fragment of a compilation of passages of the *Etymologiae* relating to time-reckoning, but rather represents a larger excerpt of the text, presumably all 20 books. The Longleat House fragment is written in Irish

45 See p. 477 below.

46 See n. 29.

47 For this *summa annorum*, ending with a countdown to the end of the sixth millennium, see Immo Warntjes, "The final countdown and the reform of the liturgical calendar in the early Middle Ages," in *Apocalypse and reform from Late Antiquity to the Middle Ages*, eds. Matthew Gabriel and James T. Palmer (New York: 2019), 59–60, 65, including references.

48 See Immo Warntjes, "The continuation of the Alexandrian Easter table in seventh-century Iberia and its transmission to ninth-century Francia (Isidore, *Etymologiae* 6.17)," *Revue d'histoire des textes*, n. s. 13 (2018), 185–94.

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script and includes an Old Irish gloss, a clear indication for Irish origin of the manuscript.[49] Palaeographic analysis seems to indicate a date of composition around AD 700. The marginal notes to the Easter table reveal that the exemplar of this Irish copy was a Visigothic copy of the *Etymologiae* written in AD 655 or shortly thereafter. These facts point to the following scenario: a copy of Isidore's *Etymologiae* incorporating an updated Easter table for AD 627–721 was produced in Visigothic Spain in AD 655 or shortly thereafter. It reached Ireland a few years later, where all passages relating to time-reckoning were extracted to form an independent textbook on calendrical science. Presumably through Breton channels, like many other computistica from Ireland, these excerpts reached Fleury/Loire Valley, where they were copied in the mid-9th century.

Excerpts of Isidore's section on Easter (*Etym.* 6.17: *De ciclo paschali*) are usually transmitted independently of any other parts of the *Etymologiae*. Effectively, *Etym.* 6.17 consists of three rather independent parts: (1) *Etym.* 6.17.1–4 on the history of Easter "cycles"; (2) *Etym.* 6.17.5–9: the 95-year Easter table; and (3) *Etym.* 6.17.10–32 on the theory of Easter calculations. The second part, the Easter table, is discussed above; the first part will be discussed below.[50] The third part, *Etym.* 6.17.10–32, provided the key theory (though only from Isidore's limited perspective), and it enjoyed a separate, very early transmission. This early transmission may be the reason why it was not more commonly included in the comprehensive collection of relevant excerpts on time-reckoning, astronomy, and cosmology outlined above: this section of the *Etymologies* had already established itself as an independent tract. In fact, in two manuscripts of the separate line of transmission (Bern BB 610; Bobbio Computus), this tract (*Etym.* 6.17.10–32) is labelled *Epistola Cyrilli*,[51] presumably to give it more authority or because the beginning drew on pseudo-Cyrill.[52] In the third codex of this independent line of transmission, the 8th-century manuscript Paris BnF

49 A facsimile of the Longleat House fragment is reproduced in James P. Carley and Ann Dooley, "An early Irish fragment of Isidore of Seville's *Etymologiae*," in *The archaeology and history of Glastonbury Abbey*, eds. Lesley Abrams and James P. Carley (Woodbridge: 1991), 138–40; the Old Irish gloss is discussed there 147–49.

50 See p. 511 below.

51 Bern BB 610, 69v–71v (Tours area, *saec.* IX$^{3/3}$): *De Pascha* […] *Explicit Epistola Sancti Cyrilli prima.* Milan BA H 150 inf., 66r–68r (= Bobbio Computus chapter 140; PL 129, 1353–4): *Incipit Epistola Cyrilli Alexandrinae urbis episcopi* […] *Explicit Epistola Sancti Cyrilli.*

52 See also pp. 505–7.

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Lat. 7530, it is simply headed *De ratione paschalis festivitatis et ut quid ita celebretur*.[53] A fourth manuscript that I have been able to locate (Karlsruhe BLB Aug. perg. 229), from the early 9th century, has no heading.[54] An even earlier codex (St Gall SB 913), connected to the famous 7th-century Canterbury school, only includes *Etym*. 6.17.19–32 and no heading.[55]

Shorter citations from *Etym*. 6.17 also circulated separately widely, but an analysis of such instances certainly lies outside the scope of the present article. It may suffice here to hint at the potential of studying such smaller quotes in more detail. The manuscripts St Gall SB 225, St Gall SB 110, and Einsiedeln SB 321 (647) share a computistical text consisting of the following elements:[56]

1. Explanation of the bissextile day as the annual increment of 3 hours (the remainder of dividing the 8760 hours of a year by 7), accumulating to 12 hours in four years.
2. 5228 years from the creation of the world to the passion of Christ according to Victorius of Aquitaine.
3. Calculation of AD from the indiction for the present year AD 751.
4. Calculation of the indiction from AD for AD 751.

53 Paris BnF Lat. 7530, 287bisv–288v (Montecassino, *c.*AD 779–798; online at: http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b84900617.r=7530?rk=42918;4).

54 Karlsruhe BLB Aug. perg. 229, 21v-24r (Chieti area, 821?; online at: http://digital.blb-karlsruhe.de/blbhs/content/titleinfo/20821). Appropriately (or not), the Isidorian excerpt here follows Martin of Braga (?), *De pascha*.

55 St Gall SB 913, 118–24 (Germany, *c.*AD 790; online at: http://www.e-codices.unifr.ch/de/list/one/csg/0913). In Paris BnF 5543, 145v-146r, *Etym*. 6.17.10–20 is preserved as part of a larger excerpt *Etym*. 6.17.1–20; see p. 467 above.

56 St Gall SB 225, 122–6 (St Gall, AD 773?; online at: http://www.e-codices.unifr.ch/de/list/one/csg/0225), St Gall SB 110, 511–6 (Verona or by Veronese scribes in Reichenau?, *saec*. VIII^{ex}; online at: https://www.e-codices.unifr.ch/de/list/one/csg/0110), and Einsiedeln SB 321 (647), 126–9 (Lake Constance region?; *saec*. IX$^{3/3}$; online at: https://www.e-codices.unifr.ch/de/list/one/sbe/0321). Comparison of these three manuscripts reveals that the items listed originally formed a cohesive text produced in AD 751 (of which the first 5 items are missing in St Gall SB 110, where the text starts abruptly on a new quire on p. 511 with the end of *Etym*. 6.17.21: *sequantur. Nam imbolismus annus …*). In each of the manuscripts, this computus of AD 751 is integrated in a larger computistical section; St Gall SB 225 and 110 share the same material up to pp. 131 and 524, respectively. The content of this computus of AD 751 is discussed by Kerstin Springsfeld, "Eine Beschreibung der Handschrift St. Gallen, Stiftsbibliothek, 225," in *Computus and its cultural context*, eds. Warntjes and Ó Cróinín, 220–25, as part of a description of the computistica in St Gall SB 225. For the 743 dating clauses, see James Palmer, "Computus after the paschal controversy of AD 740," in Warntjes and Ó Cróinín, *Computus and its cultural context*, 228–33.

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5. Calculation of the concurrent from AD for AD 743.
6. *Etym*. 6.17.21–24 on common and embolismic lunar years
7. Calculation of AP from AD.
8. Calculation of AM from the indiction for AD 743.
9. On the seasons, the second half of Isidore, *De natura rerum* 7.4.[57]

The item that is of interest for the present study obviously is no. 6, *Etym*. 6.17.21–24. This Isidorian passage appears to be forced into the older layer of AD 743, probably at the time of composition of the text in AD 751. There is no immediate logic as to why a discussion of common and embolismic lunar years was introduced at this stage, or even in this text at all, since otherwise the focus is exclusively on the solar year and linear timelines. But this excerpt shows a significant alteration of the text. Isidore states that a lunar year should be counted from *luna* 14 of one Easter lunation to *luna* 14 of the following one. Dionysius Exiguus, in his letter to Boniface and Bonus, however, had more precisely argued that the count should start at *luna* 15 of an Easter lunation.[58] The excerpt here corrects Isidore's text on the basis of Dionysius,[59] which demonstrates that by AD 751 computists had compared Isidore's treatmeant of Easter calculation with his sources.

No attempt to use Isidore alone for the creation of a computistical textbook could be successful. Isidore was strong on the definition of terms, but he was very weak in the explanation of calendrical technicalities. The first task in the formation of a comprehensive computistical textbook was the definition of the various units of time. This is where Isidore was most useful. The nucleus was provided by *Etym*. 5.29.1: *Tempora autem momentis, horis, diebus, mensibus, annis, lustris, saeculis, aetatibus dividuntur*. Of these, the *lustrum* was immediately dropped, as it constituted an antiquated concept which amounted to no more than an accumulation of five years. In other parts of his *Etymologiae*, Isidore mentioned additional units: the *athomos* in *Etym*. 13.2, *quadrans* in *Etym*. 16.25.17, *hebdoma* in *Etym*. 5.32, and *tempus* (or, in 7th-century Hiberno-Latin terminology, *vicissitudo triformis*) in *Etym*. 5.35. Additionally, for calculation purposes, two extra units were defined, the *minutum* and the *punctum*.

57 Fontaine, *Traité*, 201–03.

58 Krusch, "Studien," 84–5.

59 Springsfeld, "Beschreibung," 223, n. 46. The Bobbio Computus (cf. n. 51) shares this reading.

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Tellingly, their pseudo-etymologies were ascribed to Isidore.[60] Taken together, this amounted to 14 units of time, which are in ascending order, from the smallest to the largest:

> *Athomos, momentum* (= 16 *athomoi*), *minutum* (= 4 *momenta*), *punctum* (= 2 ½ *minuta*), *hora* (= 4 *puncta*), *quadrans* (= 6 *horae*), *dies* (= 4 *quadrantes*), *hebdoma* (= 7 *dies*), *mensis* (= 4 *hebdomada*), *vicissitudo triformis* (*tempus* = 3 *menses*), *annus* (= 4 *vicissitudines triformis*), *saeculum*, *aetas*.[61]

These 14 units of time formed the backbone of a 7th-century Irish tract *De divisionibus temporum*, now lost.

The problem with *De divisionibus temporum*, as with Isidore's calendrical information, was that it defined everything but explained nothing. In particular, the core problem, the calculation of Easter, was not solved, or even discussed. For this reason, a fifteenth unit was soon introduced after *annus*, the *cyclus*. At first, the idea was to provide a discussion of the 19-year lunar cycle. But it soon also included the 28-year solar cycle and, more prominently, the 532-year Easter cycle; also, the key technical features of these cycles, especially the *bissextus* and the *saltus lunae*, received special attention here, as did the Julian calendar with its structural elements, including Isidorian material whenever possible. All surviving copies of *De divisionibus temporum* are Frankish reworkings of ultimately Irish material.[62] Up to *annus*, they share a fundamental common stock, but from that point onwards the floodgates were opened. Still, the principle of organising a computistical textbook around the framework of the divisions of time in ascending order remained popular. Most importantly, two of the most influential compilers of computistical textbooks, Bede and Hrabanus Maurus, followed this principle and its Isidorian core.

60 Immo Warntjes, *The Munich Computus: text and translation. Irish computistics between Isidore of Seville and the Venerable Bede* (Stuttgart: 2010), CXXVI–CXXVIII, 14–17.

61 For the relations of these units of time, see Warntjes, *The Munich Computus*, 6–7.

62 Jones, *Bedae pseudepigrapha*, 48–51; Eric Graff, "The recension of two Sirmond texts: Disputatio Morini and De divisionibus temporum," in *Computus and its cultural context*, 117–25. The best witnesses appear to be those that also take the largest units of time into consideration: Oxford BL Bodley 309, 64v-73v; Basel UB F III 15k, 24v-35v; Bern BB 417, 47r-61v, 33r-v. A full study of the earliest tradition of tracts on the divisions of time is in preparation by Jacopo Bisagni.

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The divisions of time according to Isidore, *Etymologiae* V 29, §1 (Lindsay (1911))	**The divisions of time according to *DDT***
	athomus
momentum	momentum
	minutum
punctus	punctus
hora	hora
	quadrans
dies	dies
	ebdomada
mensis	mensis
	uicissitudo triformis
annus	annus
lustrum	***
saeculum	aetas
aetas	saeculum
	mundus

FIGURE 16.1 The divisions of time in Isidore's *Etymologiae* compared to *DDT*.
Note: Bold type shows the units introduced by *DDT*, and *** indicates the absence of *lustrum* in *DDT*
SOURCE: GRAFF, "THE RECENSION OF TWO SIRMOND TEXTS," 120

How Bede's earliest work on the reckoning of time, *De temporibus*,[63] was structured is revealed by an unpublished prologue prefixed to the text proper in three manuscripts from the 9th to the 11th centuries.[64] It begins:

> D[iscipulus]: Tempora, unde dicta sunt? M[agister]: A temperamento etiam nomen acceperunt, ut Isidorus in V Ethimologiarum libro testatur, hoc modo dicens: Tempora dicta sunt a communionis temperamento,

63 Bede, *De temporibus*: Jones, *Bedae opera*, 293–303.

64 Vatican BAV Pal. lat. 1447, 3r-v (Mainz, *saec.* IX^{inf}; available online at: http://digi.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/diglit/bav_pal_lat_1447); Vatican BAV Pal. lat. 1448, 1v–2v (Trier, *saec.* IX$^{1/2}$; available online at: http://bibliotheca-laureshamensis-digital.de/bav/bav_pal_lat_1448); Schaffhausen SB 61, 22r-v (Lake Constance area, *saec.* X^{inf}). The Isidorian quote is from *Etym.* 5.35 and 5.29, the latter here cited through Bede, *De temporum ratione* 2 (Jones, *Bedae opera*, 182). A version of this prologue, predominantly in Tironian notes, can also be found in Milan BA M 12 sup., 1–2 (Western Saxony?, *saec.* IX$^{3/3}$).

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quod invicem se humore, siccitate, calore, frigore temperent; seu quod momentis, horis, diebus, mensibus, annis saeculisque et aetatibus, omnia mortalis vitae curricula temperentur.
D: Divisiones temporis, quot sunt? M: XIIII, id est athomus, momentum, minutum, punctus, hora, quadras, dies, ebdomada, mensis, vicissitudo triformis, annus, aetas, saeculum.
D: Quomodo hae divisiones temporis crescent? M: Ita etiam ab athomo in momentum, a momento in minutum, a minuto in punctum, a puncto in horam, ab hora in quadrantem, a quadrante in diem, a die in ebdomadam, ab ebdomada in mensem, a mense in vicissitudinem triformem, a vicissitudine triformi in annum, ab anno in ciclum XXVIII annorum secundum solem, XVIIII annorum secundum lunam, DXXXII annorum secundum solem et lunam, quando sit integra reversio.

Student: The seasons (*tempora*), from what are they so called? Teacher: They took their name from regulation (*temperamentum*), as Isidore testifies in book 5 of the *Etymologiae*, saying this: The seasons (*tempora*) are called thus from the regulation (*temperamentum*) of the community, as they regulate in turn moisture, dryness, warmth, cold; or because all courses of mortal life are regulated by moments, hours, days, years, millennia, and ages.
Student: How many divisions of time exist? Teacher: 14, which are: atom, moment, minute, point, hour, quarter-day, day, week, month, season, year, age, millennium.
Student: How do these divisions of time grow? Teacher: Thus, from atom to moment, from moment to minute, from minute to point, from point to hour, from hour to quarter-day, from quarter-day to day, from day to week, from week to month, from month to season, from season to year, from year to 28-year solar cycle, 19-year lunar cycle, 532-year luni-solar cycle, when the return (to its beginning) is complete.

Bede rejected the *athomos* as a unit of time, directing his scorn against Irish computists.[65] Otherwise, however, Bede's *De temporibus* followed the structure of ascending units of time closely: chapters 1–6 and 8–9 discuss the nine units

65 Bede, *De temporum ratione* 3 (Jones, *Bedae opera*, 183–84; cf. Jones's commentary to this chapter on pp. 331–32). A full-scale study of Bede's responses to Irish computistics remains a major desideratum; cf. Immo Warntjes, review of: Calvin B. Kendall and Faith Wallis, *Bede, On the nature of things and On times* in *The Medieval Review* (2010). The unpublished prologue to Bede's *De temporibus* referred to in the previous note discusses the smallest units of time up to but excluding *dies*; it then continues with *De temporibus* chapter 2, *De die*.

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of *momentum* (40 *momenta* = 1 hour), hour, day, night, week, month, season, year, drawing closely on Isidore; chapters 11–12 deal with the 19-year cycle; and chapters 13–15 deal with the 532-year Easter cycle—this leaves only the rather vague largest units, *saeculum*, *aetas*, and *mundus*, which Bede tackles more or less collectively in chapter 16, his *Chronica minora*.[66] The same organising principle underlies his later, more comprehensive work of AD 725, *De temporum ratione*, though his various excursi dilute the structure.[67]

Hrabanus Maurus, in his *De computo* of AD 820,[68] is more explicit. Presumably in his time in the Loire Valley (notably in Tours), he must have been in contact with Irish intellectual thought. In chapter 10, he outlines 14 divisions of time, which matches the originally Irish concept in number though not in content (*hebdoma* and *mundus* are dropped, *ostentum* and *pars* are introduced). The first 12 divisions of time, from the *athomos* to the year, are then discussed, in all available detail, in chapters 11–35. Chapter 36 copies the 17 different categories of year of the *Libellus annalis* of AD 793, chapter 1.[69] This list includes the 19-year lunar, the 28-year solar, and the 532-year Easter cycle, and serves as justification for discussing these three cycles and related aspects in chapters 37–94, still effectively as part of the section on the year. The final two chapters, 95 and 96, appropriately focus on the last two units of time, *saeculum* and *aetas*.

But how much did Hrabanus Maurus draw directly on Isidore's works? The abbot of Fulda is renown for his lack of originality, basing most of his text on Bede's *De temporum ratione*.[70] Maria Rissel identified only four passages in which Hrabanus appears to have drawn directly on Isidore (and, in all cases, on his *Etymologiae*).[71] This attribution, however, is questionable. A good example is the first passage mentioned by Rissel. She believes that Hrabanus's chapter

66 Bede, *Chronica minora*: Theodor Mommsen, ed. MGH AA 13, 247–354 (in parallel to his edition of Bede's *Chronica maiora*). In his 1943 edition of *De temporibus*, Jones did not attempt to improve on this and omitted it altogether. In his 1977 CCSL edition, Jones simply reproduced Mommsen's ed. of the *Chronica minora* as chapter 16 of *De temporibus*.

67 Cf. Warntjes, *The Munich Computus*, CX–CXI.

68 Hrabanus Maurus, *De computo*: Wesley M. Stevens, ed., CCCM 44, 199–321.

69 For the *Libellus annalis* see pp. 484–90 below.

70 Hrabanus Maurus's *De computo* is even less original than is generally believed, since the standard edition by Stevens failed to identify Hrabanus's Frankish sources, like *Lib. ann.* 1 for chapter 37 (cf. note 91) and the unfinished Computus of AD 789. Cf. Immo Warntjes, "Köln als naturwissenschaftliches Zentrum in der Karolingerzeit: die frühmittelalterliche Kölner Schule und der Beginn der fränkischen Komputistik," in *Mittelalterliche Handschriften der Kölner Dombibliothek, Viertes Symposion*, eds. Heinz Finger and Harald Horst (Cologne: 2012), 54–55, 83–88.

71 Maria Rissel, *Rezeption antiker und patristischer Wissenschaft bei Hrabanus Maurus: Studien zur karolingischen Geistesgeschichte* (Frankfurt: 1976), 30–40. Wesley Stevens, CCCM 44, 177–82, follows Rissel in arguing that Hrabanus worked directly from Isidore.

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24 *De hebdomada* is based directly on *Etym*. 5.32 (and the editor, Wesley Stevens, agrees), while it is evident that Hrabanus rather quoted from the Irish *De divisionibus temporum*.

> Hrabanus Maurus, *De computo* 24: De ebdomada: D. Ebdomada, quid est? D. Septem dierum cursus. D. Vnde dicitur ebdomada? M. A septenario utique numero ebdomada nomen accepit. Nam ebdomada Grece, septimana dicitur latine, eo quod septem manes, id est septem dies, in se complectatur.
> *De divisionibus temporum* 13:[72] De hebdomada: Hebdomada est septem dierum cursus, et a septenario numero nomen accepit; nam hebdomada Graece septimana dicitur Latine, eo quod septem manes, id est septem dies in se complectatur.

> Isidore, *Etym*. 5.32: De hebdomada: Hebdomada dicta a numero septem dierum, quorum repetitione et menses et anni et saecula peraguntur; epta enim Graeci septem dicunt. Hanc nos septimana vocamus, quasi septem luces. Nam mane lux est. Octavus autem dies idem primus est, ad quem reditur et a quo rursus hebdomadae series orditur.

As mentioned above, the various recensions and the textual history of *De divisionibus temporum* are still awaiting an authoritative full-scale study and critical edition. It is telling that of the remaining three chapters of Hrabanus's *De computo* identified by Rissel as evidencing considerable Isidorian influence, two (95: *De saeculis* and 96: *De aetatibus*) are integral parts of *De divisionibus temporum*. The third chapter (37: *De planetis and origine nominum earum*) is probably closer to Carolingian computistical material than Isidore's *Etymologiae*. It therefore seems most likely that Hrabanus, in his computistical textbook, cited Isidore only second-hand. By the time of Helperic's *Liber de computo*, the most influential computistical textbook of the 10th and 11th centuries, the Isidorian element was all but gone, both in terms of structure and content.[73]

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72 PL 90: 659.

73 Helperic, *De computo*: Bernhard Pez, ed. (or rather transcribed from a late manuscript) in 1721, and reprinted by Migne in PL 137: 17–48. A modern critical edition of this fundamental text is a pressing *desideratum*. See Ludwig Traube, "Computus Helperici," *Neues Archiv der Gesellschaft für ältere deutsche Geschichtskunde* 18 (1893), 73–105; Patrick McGurk, "Computus Helperici: its transmission in England in the eleventh and twelfth century," *Medium Aevum* 43 (1974), 1–5; Max Manitius, *Geschichte der lateinischen Literatur des Mittelalters 1: Von Justinian bis zur Mitte des zehnten Jahrhunderts* (Munich: 1911), 446–49;

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This is the history of the computistical textbooks which evolved from Isidore's list of the units of time in *Etym.* 5.29.1. The earliest known specimen of this literary genre, however, took a slightly different route. Between *c.*AD 700 and 727, three major computistical textbooks were produced in Ireland, labelled in modern scholarship *Computus Einsidlensis*, Munich Computus, and *De ratione conputandi*. Their principal structure was threefold: (1) solar theory; (2) lunar theory; and (3) Easter calculation, as the combination of the first two. The first part was based on the divisions of time and was heavily indebted to Isidore. In fact, much of this first part reads like an assembly of excerpts under various headings, with Isidore providing the first entries and thus the backbone of this section as a whole. As mentioned earlier, however, for lunar theory and Easter calculation (often considered together as the second half of these texts by Irish computists), the *Etymologiae* were more or less worthless. To be sure, when definitions were needed and the respective term or concept could be found in the *Etymologiae*, Isidore was immediately cited. But Isidore neither explained nor understood calendrical science.[74] It was very fortunate, therefore, that key texts on the calculation of Easter arrived in Ireland slightly earlier than Isidore's *Etymologiae*. Whether these texts arrived as a defined corpus or individually remains a matter of contention.[75] Quite plausibly, however, they arrived through the same channels as Isidore's works, on a direct route from the Iberian Peninsula. The texts in question, now known as the Sirmond corpus, include at their core: the so-called *Acta synodi Caesarea*; *Epistola Pascasini*; *Epistola Proterii*; *Epistola Cyrilli*; *Prologus Cyrilli*; *Prologus Theophili*; *Disputatio Morini*; *Disputatio Chori et Praetextati*; Anatolius Latinus' *De ratione paschali*; Hilarus's *Epistola ad Victorium*; Victorius's *Epistola ad Hilarium*; Dionysius Exiguus's *Epistola ad Petronium*; Dionysius's *Epistola ad Bonifatium et Bonum*; and

André van de Vyver, "Les oeuvre inédites d'Abbon de Fleury," *Revue Bénédictine* 47 (1935), 147–49; Joachim Wiesenbach, *Sigebert von Gembloux: Liber decennalis* (Weimar: 1986), 56–58. For Pez, see now Irene Rabl, "Der digitalisierte Nachlass der Brüder Bernhard und Hieronymus Pez," *Mitteilungen des Instituts für Österreichische Geschichtsforschung* 121 (2013), 437–44.

74 Cf. pp. 459–63 above and Bernard Ribémont, *Les origins des encyclopédies médiévales, d'Isidore de Séville aux Carolingiens* (Paris: 2001), 130–42, esp. 141.

75 Braulio's *Epistola ad Eutropium* of AD 640 (Riesco Terrero, *Epistolario*, 114) provides a list of texts which may indicate that these were readily available in one compendium in the Iberian Peninsula by this time. However, Cummian discussed a similar list a decade earlier, Maura Walsh and Dáibhí Ó Cróinín, *Cummian's letter De controversia paschali, together with a related Irish computistical tract, De ratione conputandi* (Toronto: 1988), 84–87. The Sirmond manuscript contains a dating clause for AD 658 which places this collection in southern Ireland; cf. Dáibhí Ó Cróinín, "The Irish provenance of Bede's computus," *Peritia* 2 (1983), 229–47.

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pseudo-Jerome's *De sollemnitatibus*.[76] Of these, Isidore himself had used some, like the letters of Hilarus, Victorius, Dionysius, Pascasinus, pseudo-Cyrill, and the Cyrillian Prologue. Still, this corpus provided Irish computists only with the bare bones of what was to flourish into a vibrant scientific subject in the second half of the 7th century. It was in the second half of their textbooks, comprising lunar theory and Easter calculation, that Irish computists had to reconstruct meticulously the calendrical systems that underlay the various tables with which they were confronted. Isidore thus seems to have provided the foundation of early medieval calendrical science, but not its technical content.

Irish texts and computistical thought hit the continent almost immediately after they were produced, no doubt owing to established pilgrim routes and monastic networks.[77] From southern Ireland the principal route of transmission appears to have been through Brittany and the Loire Valley towards south-eastern Germany, Switzerland, and northern Italy.[78] By the mid-9th century, the monasteries in the Loire Valley (especially Fleury) were the leading centres of learning in the crumbling Carolingian Empire. They owed their exalted position to, among other factors, a constant influx of Irish thought and intellectuals.[79] One of the most remarkable productions of this mid-9th-century milieu is a massive scientific compendium, preserved in Vatican BAV Reg. lat. 123, to which Jacopo Bisagni has recently drawn the attention it deserves.[80] This encyclopaedia is divided into four books, about the sun, the moon, cosmology, and astronomy. The first two books are directly influenced by the Irish computistical textbook tradition, which is best illustrated by a comparison of the *explicit* and *incipit* of books 1 and 2, respectively, of this encyclopaedia with the division into two halves of the Irish textbook *De ratione conputandi*.

76 For the Sirmond corpus of texts, see Charles W. Jones, "The 'lost' Sirmond manuscript of Bede's computus," *English Historical Review* 52 (1937), 204–19; Dáibhí Ó Cróinín, "Bede's Irish computus," in Dáibhí Ó Cróinín, *Early Irish history and chronology* (Dublin: 1999), 201–12; Faith Wallis, *Bede: The reckoning of time* (Liverpool: 1999), lxxii-lxxix; Kerstin Springsfeld, *Alkuins Einfluß auf die Komputistik Karls des Großen* (Stuttgart: 2002), 66–80; Graff, "The recension of two Sirmond texts"; Warntjes, "Prologue of AD 699."

77 A detailed study of the spread of Irish computistical thought in Carolingian Europe and the monastic networks involved is in preparation.

78 Cf. Warntjes, *The Munich Computus*, XCVII–CVI; Immo Warntjes, "Computus as scientific thought in Ireland and the early medieval West," in *The Irish in early medieval Europe: identity, culture and religion*, eds. Roy Flechner and Sven Meeder (London: 2016), 172–74.

79 See especially the studies in John J. Contreni, *Carolingian learning, masters and manuscripts* (Aldershot: 1992).

80 Jacopo Bisagni, "The newly-discovered Irish and Breton computistica in Città del Vaticano, BAV, Reg. lat. 123," *Peritia* 28 (2017), 13–34.

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> Vatican BAV Reg. lat. 123, 74r: Explicit liber primus de sole. Certe interim, o sol, istic de te tacemus, atque relinquimus plura ut de luna narremus.[81] Incipiunt capitula libri secundi de luna.
>
> *De ratione conputandi* 62:[82] Finit de sole certe. Interim, o sol, istic de te tacemus, atque linquimus plura de luna narremus. De luna hic incipit.

Following Irish tradition, this encyclopaedia draws heavily on Isidore. In fact, in the first two books the authorities cited are principally Isidore, Bede, and an anonymous Irish computistical textbook similar to *De ratione conputandi*. Isidore is not cited second-hand here, but as a major authority directly from his own works. One heading in book 1, chapter 31, stands out in this respect: *Item Isidori in libro v Ethimologiarum capitula iii*. The *Etymologiae* survive in various recensions. If the book and chapter number can be trusted here, the author of this encyclopaedia cites an unusual recension. In the 20-book recension commonly ascribed to Braulio of Zaragoza, book 5 is constituted of two parts, *De legibus* and *De temporibus*. *De temporibus* consists of chapters 28–39, of which the chapter in question here, *De diebus*, is chapter 30. In the Spanish recension represented by Madrid BN Vitr. 14, 3 (Toletanus 15, 8), the two parts of book 5 are treated as separate books: *De legibus* is book 5, *De temporibus* constitutes book 6, with the chapter in question here being chapter 3 of that book. In the Italian recension, as represented by Wolfenbüttel HAB Cod. Guelf. 64 Weiss. and Cava AB 2, *De legibus* and *De temporum* are also separate books, but *De medicina* is placed between the two, so that the order there is: book 5—*De legibus*; book 6—*De medicina*; book 7—*De temporibus* (with *De diebus* as chapter 3).[83] None of these book and chapter divisions accord with the one mentioned in the computistical encyclopaedia in Reg. lat. 123. Apparently, the author here cites from a recension of the *Etymologiae* in which book 4 (*De medicina*) is placed later in the text, and *De legibus* and *De temporibus* are separated into books 4 and 5, respectively.

Besides the heading, another interesting aspect of this chapter is the fact that it faithfully reproduces the original chapter of the *Etymologiae* but with an insertion added, without explicit indication, between *Etym*. 5.30.8 and 9. The insertion reads:

81 I owe the reconstruction of this passage to Jacopo Bisagni.

82 Walsh and Ó Cróinín, *Cummian's letter*, 171.

83 For *De temporibus* in these recensions, see Yarza Urquiola and Andrés Santos, *Etymologiás Libro v*, vii-xv.

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Quidam ex his septem diebus uersibus explicauit:
Prima dies Phebus sacrato nomine funget
Vindicat et lucens feriam sibi Luna secundam
Inde dies rutilat iam tercia Martis honor
Mercurius quartam splendentem possideat
Iuppiter ecce sequens quintam sibi iure
Concordia Veneris magnae cum nomine sexta
Emicat alma dies Saturno septinarium

This poem can be found (in a more complete recension) in numerous computistical manuscripts from the early 9th century onwards.[84] It may have been part of the author's recension of the *Etymologiae*, but this can only be confirmed by a thorough analysis of all 9th-century manuscripts of this text.[85] More likely, the mid-9th-century author of this computistical encyclopaedia is responsible for this addition. This reworking of Isidore's original, then, provides a good insight into how some late Carolingian computists used Isidore. He was still an authority, especially in those Carolingian monasteries influenced by Irish thought, but this did not mean that his text could not, in true encyclopaedic tradition, be amended.

Finally, Vatican BAV Reg. lat. 123 helps to confirm a point raised above. The passage just discussed is tellingly part of the first book, *De sole*, following the practice of the Irish computistical textbook tradition, which also drew heavily on Isidore in the first part on solar theory. The second part, on lunar theory (and Easter calculation), relied on other authorities, with Isidore being only sporadically consulted. The Irish textbooks do not provide tables of contents, whereas this encyclopaedia does, which presents a neat overview of the use of Isidore and its limits in this more technical section of computistics:[86]

84 Manuscripts containing this poem are listed in the editions by Alexander Riese, *Anthologia Latina sive poesis Latinae supplementum, pars prior: carmina in codicibus scripta*, 2 vols (Leipzig: 1894), ii 44 (no. 488); Emil Baehrens, *Poetae Latini minores v* (Leipzig: 1883), 349, 353–54. It also appears in Oxford St John's College 17, 14v, available online at: http://digital.library.mcgill.ca/ms-17/folio.php?p=14v&showitem=14r-v_3ComputusTablesTextsI_23ComputusPoetry_6PrimaDies with more related 11th-century English MSS and texts.

85 The most recent edition of book 5 by Yarza Urquiola and Andrés Santos, *Etymologiás Libro v*, 92–93, does not indicate that this poem is included at this point in any of the codices consulted. For the potential of studying addenda to the *Etymologiae*, see Carmen Codoñer, "Transmisión y recepción de las 'Etimologías,'" in *Estudios de latín medieval hispánico*, eds. José Martínez Gázquez, Óscar de la Cruz Palma, Cándida Ferrero Hernández (Florence: 2011), 5–26.

86 Vatican BAV Reg. lat. 123, 74r-v.

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Incipiunt capitula libri secondi de luna	Here begin the chapter headings of the second book, on the moon:
I De nomine lunae Isidori	1. On the term "moon" according to Isidore
II De nomine lumine eiusdem	2. On the term "light" according to the same
III De formis lunae eiusdem	3. On the shapes of the moon according to the same
IIII De interlunio lunae eiusdem	4. On the "inbetween-lunations" of the moon according to the same
V De aetate lunae in exordio mundi Victorini et Augustini	5. On the age of the moon at the creation of the world according to Victorius and Augustine
VI De generibus lunae accensionis	6. On the categories of moonrise
VI De qua hora lunae accenditur Anatholius	7. Anatolius on the hour of moonrise
VIII Argumentum qualiter accenditur	8. Argument: how the moon rises
VIIII Argumentum ad lune aetatem inveniendam	9. Argument on finding the age of the moon
X De luna quot horas lucet Bedae	10. On the number of hours of moonlight according to Bede
XI De lunae cursu per signa Bedae	11. On the course of the moon through a zodiac sign according to Bede
XII Item de luna[e] discursu si quis signa ignorat Bedae	12. Likewise on the course of the moon if one is ignorant about the zodiac sign according to Bede
XIII Item Bedae de eodem si qui[s] computare non didicit	13. Likewise on the same topic if one did not learn to calculate according to Bede
XIIII Bedae quando uel quare luna prona uel supina uel uideatur erecta	14. When and why the moon appears upward or downward or upright according to Bede
XV Bede qua ratione luna, cum sit situ inferior, superior sole aliquoties uideatur	15. By which rationale the moon sometimes appears to be above the sun, though it is situated below it, according to Bede
XVI Bedae de effectiua lunae potentia	16. On the effective power of the moon according to Bede
XVII Bedae de concordia maris et lunae	17. On the concordance between the sea and the moon according to Bede

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XVIII Bedae quare luna aliquoties maior quam computatur pareat	18. Why the moon sometimes appears bigger than calculated according to Bede
XVIIII De saltu lunae Bedae uel aliorum auctorum	19. On the leap of the moon according to Bede and other authors
XX De discrepatione solis et lunae et de exordio epactarum Augustinus et Isidorus	20. Augustine and Isidore on the discrepancy between the sun and the moon and on the beginning of the epacts
XXI De regulis epactarum	21. On the rules of the epacts
XXII De epactis lunaribus Bedae	22. On the lunar epacts according to Bede
XXIII Argumentum quota sit luna in Kalendas Ianuarii	23. Argument on what lunar age happens to be on the Calends of January
XXIIII Quota sit luna in Kalendas quasque uel uniuscuiusque diei	24. What lunar age happens to be on whatever Calends and belongs to any given day
XXV De natura lunae Dionysius	25. Dionysius on the nature of the moon
XXVI De contrari aetatibus septem cicli lunaris	26. On the seven lunar ages contrary to the lunar cycle
XXVII De duabus lunationibus in uno mense et de luna abortiua	27. On two lunations in one month and on the abortive lunation
XXVIII De differentia lunae abortiuae et embolisma[*e*]	28. On the difference between abortive and embolismic lunation
XXVIIII Bedae de ciclo lunari	29. On the lunar cycle according to Bede
XXX Eiusdem de circulo decennouennali	30. On the decemnovenal cycle according to the same
XXXI De annis communis et embolismis Bedae et Isidori et Dionisii	31. On common and embolismic years according to Bede, Isidore, and Dionysius
XXXII De cursu communium et embolismorum de ogdoade et endecade	32. On the course of common and embolismic years through the *ogdoas* and *hendecas*
XXXIII Item Bedae de ogdoade et endecade cum epistola Dionysii	33. Likewise on the *ogdoas* and *hendecas* according to Bede, including the letter of Dionysius

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XXXIIII Bede quomodo errant quidam in primi mensis initio	34. How some err concerning the beginning of the first month according to Bede
XXXV Eiusdem de quarta decima luna paschae	35. On the Easter full moon according to the same
XXXVI Eiusdem de die dominico paschae	36. On Easter Sunday according to the same
XXXVII Eiusdem de luna ipsius diei	37. On the lunar age on that very day according to the same
XXXVIII Eiusdem Bedae de sacramento temporis paschalis	38. On the holiness of the Easter time according to the same Bede
XXXVIIII De nomine pasche Isidori uel aliorum auctorum	39. On the term "pasch" according to Isidore and other authors
XL De celebratione primitae paschae Victorii et Proterii	40. On the celebration of the first Easter according to Victorius and Proterius
XLI De dissessione paschae post resurrectionem Teophili	41. On the dispute about Easter after the resurrection according to Theophilus
XLII De diebus azimorum Hieronimi, Anatholii uel Cirilli	42. On the days of unleavened bread according to Jerome, Anatholius, or Cyril
XLIII Bedae qui[*d*] *inter pascha et azima distet*	43. The difference between Easter and the feast of unleavened bread according to Bede
XLIIII Eiusdem typica paschae interpretatio	44. The allegorical interpretation of Easter according to the same
XLV Item epistola de pascha et ciclo	45. Likewise the letter on Easter and the cycle
XLVI Isidorus [*recte Isidori*] *et Anatholii de ciclo*	46. On the cycle according to Isidore and Anatholius
XLVII Bede de circulo magno paschae	47. On the great cycle of Easter according to Bede
Expliciunt capitula libri secundi de luna	Here end the chapter headings of the second book, on the moon.

For the new genre of the computistical textbook that emerged in the second half of the 7th century, Isidore provided, rather indirectly, the basic framework. As was to be expected, his *Etymologiae* were mined for definitions of key terms. On the more technical level, Isidore's input was minimal.

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4 The Height of Computus—Isidore in the Carolingian and Post-Carolingian Era (Computistical Formularies, Calendars, and Encyclopaediae)

4.1 *Computistical Formularies*

The reception of Isidore's calendrical ideas was directly connected to the literary genre of the computistical textbook. As outlined above, it was invented in Ireland in the second half of the 7th century under heavy Isidorian influence; it was popularised by Bede, Hrabanus Maurus, and Helperic, and more anonymous textbooks were compiled for the specific needs of particular monastic and cathedral schools or individuals. At the height of computistical studies, between the formation of the subject in the second half of the 7th century and the wide reception of late antique learning in the early to mid-9th, the computistical textbook was not necessarily the preferred means of presenting calendrical knowledge. In the Carolingian 8th century, the focus shifted to what is termed the computistical formulary.

The origin of the computistical formulary in Latin can be traced back to Dionysius Exiguus's translation of Greek material into Latin in AD 525, including nine algorithms for, principally, calculating the data of his Easter table.[87] These were known to Cassiodorus, who (or whose circle) adapted them to AD 562.[88] In AD 582?, 625/627, and 675 they were expanded considerably.[89] The last of these expansions, known as the *Computus Digbeanus* of AD 675, appears to have been produced by Anglo-Saxon computists, presumably in Ireland, and Willibrord introduced this literary genre to the Frankish world, where such new texts were produced in, for example, AD 757, 760, 764, 771, 775, 780, and 789.[90] In AD 793, a monumental computistical formulary in 70 chapters was

87 The corpus of Dionysius's original *argumenta* has not survived in its original format. His *argumenta* are best preserved embedded in an extended corpus of *formulae* transmitted in Oxford BL Bodley 309, 81r-82v; Vatican BAV Pal. lat. 1447, 6v-8v; Pal. lat. 1448, 13r-17v; Vat. lat. 5755, 3–4 (cf. Warntjes, "*Argumenta*," 64–67).

88 See notes 8–9 above.

89 See Warntjes, "*Argumenta*."

90 The computistical formulary from the circle of Willibrord is discussed in Immo Warntjes, "The *Computus Cottonianus* of AD 689: A computistical formulary written for Willibrord's Frisian mission," in *The Easter controversy of Late Antiquity and the early Middle Ages*, eds. Immo Warntjes and Dáibhí Ó Cróinín (Turnhout: 2011), 173–212. The Computus of AD 757 can be found in Berlin SBPK Phillipps 1831, 90r-v; it was the subject of two talks at the 6th International Conference on the Science of Computus, Galway 2016, by Leofranc Holford-Strevens (Oxford) and James Palmer (St Andrews). The major computistical formulary of AD 760 is edited under the abbreviated title *Lect. comp.* by Arno Borst, *Schriften zur Komputistik im Frankenreich von 721 bis 818*, 3 vols (Hannover: 2006), 527–659. AD 775 saw the

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compiled, now edited under the title *Libellus annalis*.[91] It may have been influenced by the *Admonitio generalis* of AD 789, which urged all clerics to master the basics of computus.[92] Whether it was commissioned by Charlemagne (or rather his educational representatives at his palace school, especially Alcuin) is impossible to prove; the earliest transmission history points to Verona.[93] The table of contents provides a good insight into what was considered fundamental computistical knowledge:[94]

I Quot modis soleat annus nominari	1. In how many ways the year is accustomed to be named
II Argumentum, qualiter anni ab incarnatione Domini nostri Iesu Christi inveniantur	2. Argument: how the years from the incarnation of our lord Jesus Christ can be found
III Argumentum, quotus sit annus praeparationis bissextili	3. Argument: which year in the bissextile cycle it happens to be
IIII Argumentum, qualiter per annos ab incarnatione Domini invenire possis breviter ea, quae queries ad bissextum inveniendum	4. Argument: how you can quickly find on the basis of the years from the incarnation of the Lord the year in the bissextile cycle you are looking for
V Item de eadem re	5. Likewise on the same matter
VI Argumentum ad indictionem inveniendam	6. Argument on finding the indiction
VII Item quota sit indictio	7. Likewise which indiction it happens to be
VIII Argumentum, quot sint epactae	8. Argument: which epact happens to be
VIIII Est nam et alio ratio	9. For there is another calculation
X Item alia regula	10. Likewise another rule

compilation of the *Computus Rhenanus*, for which see Warntjes, "*Argumenta*," 75–76. The dates AD 764, 771, and 780 can frequently be found in the manuscripts. For the computus of AD 789, see n. 70.

91 Borst, *Schriften*, 660–772.

92 *Admonitio generalis* 70: Hubert Mordek, Klaus Zechiel-Eckes and Michael Glatthaar, eds. and trans., *Die Admonitio generalis Karls des Großen* (Hannover: 2012), 222–25.

93 The ascription of the *Lib. ann.* to Alcuin is analysed in detail and rejected by Springsfeld, *Alkuins Einfluß*, 90–104, 156–60, 171, 185–88, 215–16, 236–37, 255, 278–79, 294–302, 329–98. For Verona, see Arno Borst, "Alkuin und die Enzyklopädie von 809," in *Science in western and eastern civilization in Carolingian time*, eds. Paul Leo Butzer and Dietrich Lohrmann (Basel: 1993), 61–63; Borst, *Schriften*, 660–61.

94 Borst, *Schriften*, 676–78.

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XI Item de eadem ratione	11. Likewise on the same calculation
XII Est etiam et alio ratio de eadem re	12. There is also another calculation of the same matter
XIII De diebus epactarum	13. On the days of the epacts
XIIII Leva namque lunae epactas certe clude cunctas intra	14. Keep all lunar epacts securely included
XV Argumentum, quot sint concurrentes septimane dies	15. Argument: which concurrent day of the week happens to be
XVI Item alia	16. Likewise another
XVII Argumentum de qualibet feria	17. Likewise on whatever weekday
XVIII Est et aliud argumentum ad inveniendam feriam	18. There is another argument on finding the weekday
XVIIII Incipit calculatio, quomodo repperiri posset, quota feria singulis annis quarta decima luna paschae occurrat	19. It begins the calculation on how it is possible to find on which weekday the Easter full moon occurs in any given year
XX Quota sit feria Kalendas Ianuarii per singulos annos	20. Which weekday happens to be on the Calends of January in any given year
XXI Quot dies sint Kalendas Ianuarias	21. Which days happen to be on the Calends of January
XXII De initio diei	22. On the beginning of the day
XXIII Item alia	23. Likewise another
XXIIII Argumentum, quotus sit ciclus decennovenalis	24. Argument: which year in the decemnovenal cycle happens to be
XXV Argumentum, quotus sit ciclus lunaris	25. Argument: which year in the lunar cycle happens to be
XXVI Argumentum, quotus sit annus in ciclo solari	26. Argument: which year in the solar cycle happens to be
XXVII Quotus sit annus in ciclo solari	27. Which year in the solar cycle happens to be
XXVIII Item de eadem ratione	28. Likewise on the same calculation
XXVIIII Argumentum de termino paschali inveniendo	29. Argument on finding the paschal terminus
XXX Item alia	30. Likewise another
XXXI Item de eadem ratione	31. Likewise about the same calculation
XXXII Versus de eadem re	32. Verses on the same matter
XXXIII De nativitate lunae	33. On the (Easter) new moon
XXXIIII Item alia	34. Likewise another
XXXV Item de eadem ratione	35. Likewise on the same calculation

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XXXVI De paschali ratione	36. On Easter calculation
XXXVII De Christianorum pascha	37. On the pasch of the Christians
XXXVIII Quot diebus debeamus pascha celebrari	38. On the number of days on which we have to celebrate Easter
XXXVIIII De accensione lunae	39. On the waxing of the moon
XL Argumentum, in quo puncto luna accendatur, vel quota sit aetas eiusdem lunae ipsa diei	40. Argument: at which number of points the moon rises, or which age of that same moon happens to be on that very day
XLI Item de eadem re	41. Likewise on the same matter
XLII Argumentum, quota sit luna in Kalendis Ianuarii	42. Argumentum: Which moon happens to be on the Calends of January
XLIII Est aliud argumentum de qualibet luna	43. This is another argument on any given moon
XLIIII Argumentum, quot horas luna luceat	44. Argument: How many hours does the moon shine
XLV Item de eadem re	45. Likewise on the same matter
XLVI Argumentum de cursu lunae per signa	46. Argumentum on the course of the moon through the (zodiac) signs
XLVII Item de eadem re	47. Likewise on the same matter
XLVIII Racio lunaris in anno bissextili	48. Lunar calculation in bissextile years
XLVIIII De ratione saltus lunae	49. On the calculation of the leap of the moon
L. Item de eadem re	50. Likewise on the same matter
LI Concordia maris et lunae malina, ledon, malina, ledon	51. The correspondence between the sea and the moon: spring tide, neap tide, spring tide, neap tide
LII Loca embolismorum	52. The places of the embolisms
LIII De ratione aequinoctii	53. On the calculation of the equinox
LIIII De augmento diei vel noctis	54. On the increase of day(light) or night(light)
LV De ratione longissimi diei vel brevissimae noctis	55. On the calculation of the longest day or the shortest night
LVI De ogdoade et endecade	56. On the *ogdoas* and the *hendecas*
LVII De nomine decennovenali	57. On the term "decemnovenal cycle"
LVIII De differentia lunaris compoti	58. On the differences of lunar calculations
LVIIII Qualis sit annus communis	59. The characteristics of the common year

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LX Qualis sit annus solaris	60. The characteristics of the solar year
LXI De particione temporum	61. On the divisions of time
LXII Ubi incipiant epactae vel concurrentes	62. Where (in the Julian calendar) the epacts and the concurrents begin
LXIII De ratione bisse	63. On the rationale of the fraction 3/4
LXIIII De quattuor temporibus in anno	64. On the four season in a year
LXV De ratione numerorum	65. On the rationale of numbers
LXVI De quinque stellis, quae dicuntur planetae	66. On the five stars, which are called planets
LXVII Plinius Secundus in libro octavo decimo, cum de astrologia disputasset, de duabus stellis ita disseruit	67. Pliny the Second (the Elder) had this to say about the two stars in book 18, where he lectured on astrology
LXVIII Item eiusdem paulo ante in eodem libro	68. Likewise by the same (author) slightly earlier in the same book
LXVIIII De cursu solis et lunae per signa	69. On the course of the sun and the moon through the (zodiac) signs
LXX Opinatio philosophica de spatio aeris	70. Philosophical opinion on air space

Hardly any of these headings bear any resemblance to those found in either the *Etymologiae* or Isidore's *De natura rerum*. In the *Libellus annalis*, as in this genre of the computistical formulary more generally, there was no room for Isidore. Isidore's interest lay in defining terms etymologically, while these formularies principally provided algorithms for calendrical calculation, of which Isidore was either ignorant or disinterested. Only when definitions were needed can traces of Isidore be found. A good example is the very first chapter on various types of years.[95] In *Etym*. 5.36, Isidore had outlined 3 types (*genera*) of years, the lunar "year" of 30 days, the solstitial year of 12 months, and the great year (*magnus annus*) of numerous solstitial years (the undefined period it takes all planets to return to their initial position in the zodiac). Throughout his work, however, other types of years could be found: the solar year of 365 ¼ years of *Etym*. 5.36.1; the common and embolismic years of *Etym*. 6.17.21–24; the bissextile year of 366 days of *Etym.* 6.17.25; the *iubileus annus* of *Etym*. 5.37.3.[96] Bede, in his *De temporum ratione*, used much of this information, out-

95 Borst, *Schriften*, 679–83.

96 Isidore produced a more comprehensive list of eight different types of years in *De natura rerum* 6.3–4, Fontaine, ed., *Traité*, 192–95 (this edition will be used throughout): *annus*

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lining four lunar (sidereal lunar month of 27 days and 6 hours, synodic lunar month of 29 days and 12 hours, and common and embolismic years of 354 and 384 days, respectively) and three solar years (sidereal solar year of 365 ¼ days, common and bissextile years of 365 and 366 days, respectively), and the *annus magnus* defined as the period it takes for all planets to return to their initial position in the zodiac.[97] The *Libellus annalis* of AD 793 expands this list of different types of years to 17, principally adding information about the planetary orbits and the *iubileus annus* from a different chapter of Bede's work.[98] Thus, this Carolingian text incorporates Isidorian thought through a Bedan filter. Three of the years mentioned demonstrate the textual relationship:

annus embolismus:

> *Etym.* 6.17.22–23: Embolismus annus est qui tredecim menses lunares, id est trecentos octuaginta quattuor dies habere monstratur. […] Embolismus autem nomen grecum est, quod interpretatur latine superaugmentum, eo quod expleat numerum annorum communium, quibus undecim lunares dies esse cernuntur.
>
> Bede, *De temporum ratione* 36: Quartus qui embolismus graece dicitur, id est superaugmentum, et habet xiii menses, id est dies ccclxxxiiii.
>
> *Lib. ann*. 1.4: Quartus, qui est embolismus grece dicitur, id est superaugmentum, et habet tredecim menses, id est dies trecentos octoginta quattuor.

annus iubileus:

> *Etym.* 5.37.3: Iubileus interpretatur remissionis annus. Est enim Hebraicus et sermo et numerous, qui septenis annorum hebdomadibus, id est quadraginta nouem annis texitur, in quo clangebantur tubae et ad omnes reuertebatur antiqua possessio, debita absoluebantur, confirmabantur libertates.

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naturalis (the period from one solar eclipse to the next); *annus magnus* (the period it takes all planets to return to their initial position in the zodiac, here of 19 years); *annus solistitialis* (the period it takes the sun to traverse the zodiac); *annus civilis* of 365 days; *annus communis* and *embolismus* of 354 and 384 days, respectively; *annus bissextilis* of 366 days; *annus iubeleus* of 49 years.

97 Bede, *De temporum ratione* 36, Jones, *Bedae opera*, 249.

98 Bede, *De temporum ratione* 8, Jones, *Bedae opera*, 196–98.

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> Bede, *De temporum ratione* 8: Sexta, anni iubilei, hoc est remissionis, hebdomada est, quae septem hebdomadibus annorum, hoc est xlix annis, texitur; qua expleta, hoc est quinquagesimo demum anno incipiente, tubae clarius resonabant et ad omnes, iuxta legem, possessio revertebatur antiqua.
>
> *Lib. ann*. 1.16: Sexta decima species anni est iubelei, qui est annus remissionis, et quinquaginta impletur annis.

annus magnus:

> *Etym.* 5.36.1: aut magnus, omnibus planetis in eundem locum recurrentibus, qui fit post annos solstitiales plurimos.
>
> Bede, *De temporum ratione* 36: Annus magnus est cum omnia simul errantia sidera ad sua quaeque loca quae simul habuere recurrunt.
>
> *Lib. ann.* 1.17: Septimus decimus annus est, qui vocatur magnus annus planetarum, dum omnia sidera ad locum revertuntur, ubi primum statua fuerunt, et quingentis triginta duobus annis impletur.

More generally, Bede defined most of the fundamental computistical terminology. In this, Bede (and others) drew heavily on Isidore, but the Northumbrian's explanations were more conclusive. Also, and more importantly, Bede's textbook on the reckoning of time became a more obvious and cohesive reference point than the scattered references in the *Etymologiae*. Only rarely were the *Etymologiae* still consulted directly, mainly as additional information when the strictly computistical texts were felt to be wanting. The *Libellus annalis* provides another excellent example in this respect: three excerpts were added from Isidore's *Etymologiae*, here entitled *De interlunio* (*Etym*. 3.54 [= 3.55 Lindsay]), *De eclypsin solis* (Etym. 3.57 [= 3.58 Lindsay]), and *De eclypsin lunis* (*Etym*. 3.58.1–2 [= 3.59 Lindsay], also including excerpts from *Etym*. 49.1 [= 50 Lindsay]), to chapter 69 (*De cursu solis et lunae per signa*), which is exclusively based on Bede. Of the 81 manuscripts which Borst lists as containing parts of the *Libellus annalis*, an impressive 32 codices from the 9th to the 12th century include these Isidorian excerpts (or at least some of them, and not necessarily directly connected to *Lib. ann.* 69). Isidore was still used in computistical formularies towards the end of the 8th century, but two trends worked strongly against him: his lack of engagement with calendrical calculations, which formed the core of computus, and the reworking of his definitions in a more lucid and more accessible way in Irish textbooks and, especially, by Bede.

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4.2 *Calendars*

The other important early medieval literary genre introduced by Willibrord to Francia was the calendarium. The Julian calendar became authoritative in the Roman Empire in 46 BC, and it remained the standard in the successor kingdoms after the fall of the Western part of the Empire.[99] More importantly, it was embraced by Christianity, and the liturgical calendar was designed accordingly. With the Julian calendar's counter-intuitive structure of counting days backwards from fixed marker days (e.g. Ides of March = 15 March; second [day before the] Ides of March = 14 March; third [day before the] Ides of March = 13 March; etc.), some explanation was needed for students of the emerging science of computus. In *Etym*. 5.33, Isidore provided etymologies for all twelve Julian calendar months (January, February, March, April, May, June, July, August, September, October, November, December), and for the three marker days (Calends, Nones, Ides), but similar to his account of the Easter cycle, he did not provide practical information, not even the essential details, such as how many days the individual months have, or on which days the marker days are placed in the individual months. As with his chapter on Easter, 7th- and 8th-century computists embraced Isidore's definitions, but they used more appropriate literature for the technical details. For calendrical theory, relief came through excerpts from Macrobius's *Saturnalia*, which circulated under the title *Disputatio Chori et Praetextati*.[100]

Unlike his treatment of Easter, Isidore did not provide a table in his discussion of the Julian calendar months. This is important, because Isidore would have been a (if not the) prime witness for the transmission of the Julian calendar from Late Antiquity to the early Middle Ages. As the transmission history stands, there is a fundamental gap between the calendars of Philocalus and Polemius Silvivius of AD 354 and 448/449, respectively, and Willibrord's calendar of the late 7th century.[101] The late antique calendars were produced in a Christian milieu; the calendars themselves, however, portray no information concerning the regulation of the liturgical year. This was the key function of the calendar after it was fully absorbed into monastic intellectual culture, and Willibrord's calendar is the first of its kind to include such information: it marks the beginning of the medieval calendar tradition. Within the century

99 See now Sacha Stern, *Calendars in Antiquity: Empires, states, and societies* (Oxford: 2012), 204–27.

100 An *editio princeps* of this fundamental text with translation and substantial commentary by Leofranc Holford-Strevens is in press.

101 The *Fasti* of Philocalus and Polemius Silvius are edited in parallel in Theodor Mommsen, *Corpus inscriptionum latinarum* 1.1 (Berlin: 1863), 332–57; Willibrord's calendar is edited by H.A. Wilson, *The Calendar of St.Willibrord: A facsimile with transcription, introduction and notes* (London: 1918).

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after its introduction to the continent in AD 690, the calendar had received a prototypical format which dominated the early and high Middle Ages right into the 12th century. At least this is the theory of Arno Borst, who has admirably outlined this tradition in his monumental three-volume edition of the so-called *Reichskalender*.[102] The centrepiece of Borst's theory is the Lorsch calendar of AD 789 (preserved in Berlin SBPK Phillipps 1869).[103]

A calendar principally contains twelve sections, one for each month. More often than not, each month occupies one manuscript page. The basic structure for each month is a list of all its dates. Since the calendar was appropriated to serve specific liturgical customs, saints' days were included for some dates. Also, key computistical information relating to the calculation of Easter (or not) was noted, such as the spring equinox, the beginnings of the seven embolismic months, the *saltus lunae*, the beginnings of the seasons, and the entry of the sun into specific zodiac signs. On the left-hand margin, alphabetic and numeric sequences allowed for the calculation of the weekday, lunar age, and place of the moon in the zodiac for any given date for any given year. Also, additional information was prefixed and attached to each month.

Tracing Isidorian influence in the calendar tradition is even more problematic than it is for the other computistical genres, simply because the transmission history is so complex. Borst has identified and classified 252 calendars dating between the 8th and the 12th centuries that fitted his definition of being ultimately descended from Charlemagne's *Reichskalender*.[104] To a surprising degree, his prototype calendar (the Lorsch calendar of AD 789), the basis of this tradition, shows no visible trace of Isidorian influence. Only the mention of the Dog Days (the period of visibility of the Dog Star, Sirius) may go back to Isidore. For 14 July, the Lorsch calendar notes *dies caniculari*. The term may have been taken from *Etym*. 3.70.14 (= 3.71.14 Lindsay) or *De natura rerum* 26.14 (both *dies caniculares*). The more likely scenario, however (especially since Isidore did not provide a specific date), is that this information was taken from a Roman (?) model, as it was an integral part of Polemius Silvius's calendar,[105]

102 Arno Borst, *Der karolingische Reichskalender und seine Überlieferung bis ins 12. Jahrhundert*, 3 vols (Hannover: 2001).

103 Berlin SBPK Phillipps 1869, 1v-11v (Prüm, *saec*. IX$^{2/3}$). This *Reichskalender* / Lorsch calendar of AD 789 can best be accessed through Arno Borst, *Die karolingische Kalenderreform* (Hannover: 1998), 253–301.

104 Borst, *Reichskalender*, XIII–XX, LIII, 54–333; an additional 13 calendars are added in Arno Borst, *Der Streit um den karolingischen Kalender* (Hannover: 2004), 129–58.

105 The *dies canicularis* is noted by Polemius Silvius for 27 July (p. 347). In the earliest medieval calendar tradition, between Willibrord (*c*.AD 690) and the Reichskalender (AD 789), the *dies caniculares* can be found for 14 July in Trento MP 1590, 211v (northern Italy, *c*.AD

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and maybe also of the *Codex cosmographium* mentioned by Bede.[106] In fact, if Borst's reconstruction of the earliest medieval calendar transmission is correct, a Roman model moved from mid-7th-century Rome to Anglo-Saxon England to Charlemagne's court in the AD 780s in a relatively unaltered form.[107] Thus, the pre–mid-7th-century Roman origin of this archetype of the medieval calendar would place it outside of Isidorian influence.

On the other hand, the relatively late date of origin of the defining prototype exposed it to Bedan influence. In fact, Paul Meyvaert has argued that Borst's *Reichskalender* represents, in effect, the lost calendar originally attached to Bede's *De temporum ratione*.[108] Certainly by AD 789, originally Isidorian information would now be cited through a Bedan filter, as discussed above. A good example here are the beginnings of the Egyptian months. Isidore (DNR 4.7) had outlined the Julian calendar date on which each of the Egyptian months commenced. About their names, however, he remained silent. Bede, on the other hand, provided both in *De temporum ratione*, taking the dates from Isidore, and the names from Polemius Silvius or a comparable Roman calendar.[109] Since the names of the Egyptian months are explicitly mentioned in the *Reichskalender* at the date of their commencements, this information comes directly from Bede, not Isidore.

A more fruitful approach for tracing Isidorian influence in the early medieval calendar tradition may be to focus on its earliest, pre-*Reichskalender* specimen.[110] The computistical information in these is very limited; there is a strong focus on martyrological (and some historical) entries. This may hint at a development of the early medieval calendar tradition independent of Roman exemplars, straight out of brevaries (short martyrologies) by computistically trained

835; the calendar can be dated to AD 772; *dies canicularii*); Paris BnF Lat. 7530, 279r (Montecassino, *c.*AD 7:779–798; online at: http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b84900617.r=7530?rk=42918;4; *dies caliculares*). Pliny NH 2.40.107; 18.269, and after him Bede, *De natura rerum* 11 (ed. by Charles W. Jones in CCSL 123, 203), talk about the rise of the star *Canicula* on 18 July, not the following *dies canicularis*. See also Arno Borst, *Das Buch der Naturgeschichte: Plinius und seine Leser im Zeitalter des Pergaments*, 2nd ed. (Heidelberg: 1995), 134–35.

106 For the *Codex cosmographium* and Bede's potential use of it, see Paul Meyvaert, "Discovering the calendar (*annalis libellus*) attached to Bede's own copy of *De temporum ratione*," *Analecta Bollandiana* 120 (2002), 16–25.

107 This is most pronouncedly formulated by Borst, *Streit*, 10–11.

108 Meyvaert, "Discovering the calendar."

109 Bede, *De temporum ratione* 11, Jones, *Bedae opera*, 205.

110 A good overview of these can be found in Borst, *Kalenderreform*, 189–200. I also consider the calendar in Trento MP 1590, 204r-217v as pre-*Reichskalender*, as it provides the date AD 772. Borst, *Reichskalender*, 286–88, vehemently rejected this date, but I can see no compelling reason for this rejection.

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monks. Certainly, there is no trace of Polemius Silvius in Willibrord's calendar. An interesting case in point is Willibrord's references to the beginning of the seasons. Polemius Silvius had noted these at the equinoxes and solstices. Willibrord, on the other hand, followed Isidore (DNR 7.5) by setting the beginning of the seasons exactly 30 days before the equinoxes and solstices. Isidore's influence is further revealed by Willibrord's mention of the length of each season. Interestingly, however, while Willibrord's calendar reproduces the exact same date for the beginnings of the seasons as Isidore (VIII Kal. Mar. = 22 February—spring; VIIII Kal. Jun. = 24 May—summer; X Kal. Sept. = 23 August—autumn; VII Kal. Dec. = 25 November—winter), the number of days attributed to each season is different (spring: Isidore 91, Willibrord 91; summer: Isidore 91, Willibrord 91; autumn: Isidore 93, Willibrord –; winter: Isidore 90, Willibrord 91). In terms of the number of days Willibrord is closer to a passage in the Bobbio Computus, and it may well be that Willibrord here worked from such an (Irish?) reworking of Isidore rather than directly from the bishop of Seville's writings.[111] Later practice, in the *Reichskalender* and subsequently, of noting both Isidore's and Bede's beginnings of the seasons (Bede's falls two weeks earlier than Isidore's) is heralded by the famous Ilmmuenster fragment in Anglo-Saxon script of the second quarter of the 8th century.[112]

Likewise, the Anglo-Saxon Walderdorffer fragment of the mid- to late 8th century noted the traditional Roman solstices and equinoxes, which may well have been taken from Isidore DNR 8.1 or *Etym*. 5.34.2–3.[113] The Irish-Merovingian Nivelles calendar of the first half of the 8th century also noted the old Roman winter solstice on 25 December but otherwise preferred the Greek date, four days earlier.[114] Irish computistical texts of the early 8th century had recorded both traditions, and it therefore is not surprising to find them both in

111 Bobbio Computus 27 (Milan BA H 150 inf., 13v = PL 129, 1290). It seems that Willibrord intended to place the beginning of winter on VIII Kal. Dec. rather than Isidore's VII Kal. Dec. For the variation between 24 and 25 November in the early medieval calendar tradition, see Borst, *Reichskalender*, 1521–26.

112 Munich HAS Raritaetenselekt 108 (now lost); Klaus Gamber, ed., *Das Bonifatius-Sakramentar und weitere frühe Liturgiebücher aus Regensburg* (Regensburg: 1975), 49–52. See esp. Paul Grosjean, "Un fragment d'obituaire anglo-saxon du VIIIe siècle," *Analecta Bollandiana* 79 (1961), 320–45; Mechthild Gretsch, "Æthelthryth of Ely in a lost calendar from Munich," *Anglo-Saxon England* 35 (2006), 159–77.

113 Private possession of Graf Walderdorff in Schloss Hauzenstein (Regensburg), Gamber, *Bonifatius-Sakramentar*, 53–59 (followed by a facsimile).

114 Zürich ZB Rh. 30, 166v-169v, Anton Hänggi and Alfons Schönherr, eds., *Sacramentarium Rhenaugiense: Handschrift Rh 30 der Zentralbibliothek Zürich* (Fribourg: 1970), 294–99 (48–53 for commentary).

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an Irish-influenced calendar of a few decades later. Both traditions remained popular in later centuries.

Isidore also has his place in the post-*Reichskalender* tradition. Quite expectedly, Isidore's etymologies of the names of the months (DNR 4.3–4; *Etym.* 5.33.3–11) feature in some calendars as a prelude or, more often, appendix to each month. Some quotations are direct, others through a version of the Irish *De divisionibus temporum* (which included citations from Macrobius's *Saturnalia*, or rather the tract *Disputatio Chori et Praetextati* = *Sat.* 1.12.2–15.20, which enjoyed a separate transmission). Two lines of transmission can be traced for these etymologies in the early medieval calendar tradition, one branching out from late 9th-century St Gall to south-east Germany (especially Borst's calendars F 4, 6, f 2, 3), the other from the Loire Valley of the late 10th century to southern France (represented by G 1 and 2). It is noteworthy that these Isidorian additions were made in areas traditionally influenced by Irish thought.

More isolated examples of Isidorian influence on the calendar tradition also point to centres with Irish connections. For example, Isidore's list of concordances of the length of daylight in each month (DNR 5.1: January = December, February = November, etc.) appears as an addition to the calendar proper in a 9th-century Reichenau codex (and also in a late-9th century manuscript from Echternach).[115] More interestingly, Isidore's curious reference to *IV Nonas Martii* (2 March) in connection with the bissextile day (*Etym.* 6.17.27) can be found, explicitly mentioning Isidore by name, in the mid-9th century Loire Valley–northern French codices Karlsruhe BLB Aug. 167 (F 2) and St Gall SB 248 (F 3). These calendars were heavily influenced by Irish thought, as this reference to the bissextile day on 2 March reveals as much as the Irish saints mentioned therein.[116] From northern France–Loire Valley this Isidorian concept may have found its way back to Spain, if the calendars in El Escorial RB d.I.2 (Albelda, AD 974–76) and Silos AM 4 (Albelda, AD 1052) (c 19, 20 in Borst) were not fed by more native traditions.

On the whole, however, Isidorian influence in the calendar tradition is extremely minimal. Whether Bede or Charlemagne revolutionised this genre in the 8th century is likely to remain a matter of dispute. Certainly, Bedan (and

115 Reichenau: Paris BnF Lat. 4860, 16or (F1 in Borst *Der karolingische Reichskalender*; online at: http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b10721203n.r=4860?rk=42918;4); Echternach: Paris BnF Lat. 9433, 14r (A8 in Borst; online at: http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b8479011k.r=9433?rk=42918;4).

116 For a thorough study of the calendar in Karlsruhe BLB Aug. perg. 167 (the only one in Irish script), see Marc Schneiders, "The Irish calendar in the Karlsruhe Bede (Karlsruhe, Badische Landesbibliothek, Cod. Aug. CLXVII, ff. 16v–17v)," *Archiv für Liturgiewissenschaft* 31 (1989), 33–78.

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Plinian) thought almost completely dominated the computistical and astronomical references provided in this genre. The limited space which the calendar structure provided certainly did not leave much room for discussion of alternative views. If genuinely Isidorian quotes can be traced in early medieval calendars, they relate to a pre-Bedan or pre-Bedan influence stratum (with Bede's computistica not receving a major reception before the AD 780s), or to local, often Irish-influenced preferences.

4.3 *Computistical Encyclopaediae*

If Isidore is least represented in the calendar tradition, he is best attested in the third genre of computistical texts to be discussed for the Caroligian period, and the only one that originated in the Carolingian Empire. The *Annalis libellus* of AD 793, though still a computistical formulary, had reached a considerable size. It appears that shortly after this date a central decision was taken for the production of comprehensive computistical encyclopaediae. The two key codices of the Carolingian era, produced shortly after AD 800 in Cologne and Verona (Cologne DB 83-11; Berlin SBPK Phillipps 1831), are the earliest attestations of a substantial collection of diverse material. In AD 809, the year of the famous Council of Aachen, this material was excerpted and rearranged, eventually pressed into a more cohesive structure in seven books, dealing with (1) the liturgical calendar and chronology, (2) basic calendrical formulae, (3) the Julian calendar year (solar calculations), (4) lunar calculations, (5) astronomy, (6) measurement, and (7) cosmology.[117] This was followed in AD 818 by an even more substantial work, which is commonly attributed to the bishopric of Salzburg.[118] It was arranged in 115 chapters, not in books, and therefore lacks the clear structure of the earlier work of AD 809. Here, the organising principle was literary genres rather than subjects. The first part (c. 1–12), on chronology and the liturgical calendar, deals with tables; the second (c. 13–63) is modelled on the computistical formulary; the third (c. 64–99) is an abridged version of Bede's computistical textbook, *De temporum ratione*; the fourth (c. 100–08), fifth (c. 109–11), and sixth (c. 112) are modelled on the encyclopaedia of AD 809, outlining astronomy, measurement, and cosmology; and c. 113–15 are simply addenda.

In these two encyclopaediae, the section on cosmology would have been the most natural place to incorporate Isidorian thought. However, Isidore's *De natura rerum* was superseded by Bede's work of the same name, which was

117 The encyclopaedia of AD 809 is ed. under the abbreviated title of *Lib. comp*. by Borst, *Schriften*, 1054–1334.

118 The encyclopaedia of AD 818 is ed. under the abbreviated title of *Lib. calc*. by Borst, *Schriften*, 1367–1451.

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included in full in both. Bede had outshone his predecessors and teachers, whose voices could only be heard through his filter, not only in computistics, but also in cosmology.

But the Carolingian intellectual centre, the Aachen palace school (or any other intellectual circle), did not dominate or control scientific thought in the long run (presumably not even in the short run).[119] The disintegration of the Carolingian Empire from the AD 830s onwards led to the establishment of new intellectual powerhouses, and the periphery overtook the former centre, employing its own approaches to learning, its own preferences in essential readings. Good examples are Fleury and St Gall, whose influence is visible because of an excellent transmission history of its libraries.[120] Both monasteries benefitted from Irish intellectual thought, which the Carolingian centre around the Aachen palace school had tried to sideline in favour of Bede as the authoritative author. Since Irish tradition was strongly based on Isidore, the master received recognition when his students were consulted.

An excellent example of an Irish-influenced encyclopaedia is transmitted in Vatican BAV Reg. Lat. 123, written at Ripoll in AD 1056.[121] But except for a brief section inserted at this time and place,[122] the content reveals an origin in the mid-9th century Loire Valley (probably Fleury).[123] Compared to the two encyclopaediae of AD 809 and 818, this one has a more structured approach, classifying scientific thought in four categories/books: (1) solar theory; (2) lunar theory; (3) cosmology; and (4) astronomy. The first two books have been discussed above, and they show as strong an Isidorian influence as appropriate for the subject matters. The third and fourth books are best suited for comparison with the earlier encyclopaediae. While the texts of AD 809 and 818 simply reproduce Bede's *De natura rerum* for cosmology, the Vatican encyclopaedia

119 For critique of Borst's model of scientific thought having been centralised in the Carolingian Empire, see Warntjes, "Köln"; James Palmer, "Calculating time and the end of time in the Carolingian world, c.740–820," *English Historical Review* 126 (2011), 1307–31; Ivana Dobcheva, "The umbrella of Carolingian computus," in *La compilación del saber en la edad media*, eds. María José Muñoz Jiménez, Patricia Cañizares Ferriz, and Cristina Martin (Porto: 2013), 211–30.

120 For Fleury, see Marco Mostert, *The library of Fleury: a provisional list of manuscripts* (Hilversum: 1989). The St Gall manuscripts are readily accessible on http://www.cesg.unifr.ch/en/.

121 On folio 126r-v, the only copy of a letter by the monk Oliva to the abbot Oliva (of Ripoll) is transmitted; the date of AD 1056 is provided by a note to that year in the Easter table on folio 118r: *eodem anno factus est liber iste*.

122 Vatican BAV Reg. lat. 123, 111r, 119r-127v, 151r-v.

123 For the Fleury connection, see Charles W. Jones in CCSL 123, 692. A full-scale study of this manuscript is in preparation.

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assembles knowledge directly from various sources, principally Bede, Pliny, and Isidore.[124] For astronomy, the two earlier encyclopaediae principally relied on Pliny. The Vatican encyclopaedia again presents a much broader approach, as the table of contents of book 4 illustrates:[125]

Incipiunt capitula libri quarti De astranomia	The chapter headings of the fourth book on astronomy begin:
I Isidori quid sit astranomia	1. What astronomy may be according to Isidore
II Eiusdem de inuentoribus astronomiae	2. On the inventors of astronomy according to the same
III Eiusdem de scriptoribus astronomia	3. On the writers of astronomy according to the same
IIII Eiusdem de differentia astronomiae et astrologiae	4. On the difference between astronomy and astrology according to the same
V Eiusdem de astronomiae ratione	5. On the rationale of astronomy according to the same
VI Eiusdem de caelo eiusque nomine	6. On the heaven and its name according to the same
VII Eiusdem de septem planetis caeli	7. On the seven planets of the heaven according to the same
VIII De spatia caelorum	8. On the spheres of the heavens
VIIII De nominibus caelorum secundum Grecos	9. On the names of the heavens according to the Greeks
X Isidori de caelo et aethere	10. On the heaven and the ether according to Isidore
XI Bedae de firmamento	11. On the firmament according to Bede
XII Eiusdem de uaria altitudine caeli	12. On the varying altitude of the heaven according to the same
XIII Eiusdem de caelo superiore	13. On the higher heaven according to the same
XIIII Isidori de caelesti spere situ	14. On the location of the celestial sphere according to Isidore
XV Igini de centro	15. On the centre according to Hyginus

124 See the table of contents for book 3 in Vatican BAV Reg. lat. 123, 127r-v.

125 Vatican BAV Reg. lat. 123, 151r-152r.

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XVI Isidori de axe caeli	16. On the axis of the heaven according to Isidore
XVII Hygini de caelestibus polis	17. On the celestial poles according to Hyginus
XVIII Eiusdem de significationibus	18. On their significance according to the same
XVIIII Isidori de spere motu	19. On the movement of the sphere according to Isidore
XX Eiusdem de spere cursu	20. On the course of the sphere according to the same
XXI Eiusdem de celeritate caeli	21. On the speed of heaven according to the same
XXII Eiusdem de carminibus caeli	22. On the poems of heaven according to the same
XXIII Eiusdem de conuexis caeli	23. On the arches of heaven according to the same
XXIIII Eiusdem de ianuis caeli	24. On the doors of heaven according to the same
XXV Eiusdem de gemina facie caeli	25. On the double shape of heaven according to the same
XXVI Eiusdem de emispherion	26. On the hemisphere according to the same
XXVII Bedae et Isidori de aquis caelestibus	27. On the celestial waters according to Bede and Isidore
XXVIII Isidori, Bedae et Hygini de quinque circulis caeli	28. On the five circles of heaven according to Isidore, Bede, and Hyginus
XXVIIII Macrobii Ambrosii de decem circulis caeli	29. On the ten circles of heaven according to Macrobius Ambrosius
XXX Bedae et Isidori de lacteo circulo	30. On the milky way according to Bede and Isidore
XXXI Isidori et Bedae de zodiaco circulo	31. On the zodiac according to Isidore and Bede
XXXII Isidori de nominibus stellarum et lapsis	32. On the names of the stars and their fallings according to Isidore
XXXIII Eiusdem cur sidera dicuntur	33. Why the stars are so called according to the same
XXXIIII Eiusdem de differentia stellarum siderumque atque astrorum	34. On the difference between stars, star clusters, and constellations according to the same

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XXXV Eiusdem de lumine stellarum	35. On the light of the stars according to the same
XXXVI De stellarum situ	36. On the location of the stars
XXXVII Eiusdem de stellarum cursu	37. On the course of the stars according to the same
XXXVIII Eiusdem de uario cursu stellarum	38. On the varying course of the stars according to the same
XXXVIIII Eiusdem de stellarum interuallis	39. On the intervals of the stars according to the same
XL Bedae de stellis natura	40. On the nature of the stars according to Bede
XLI Isidori de circulari numero stellarum	41. On the circular number of the stars according to Isidore
XLII Eiusdem de precedentia et antegradatione stellarum	42. On the preceding and the forward motion of the stars according to the same
XLIII Eiusdem de remotiore et retrogradatione stellarum	43. On the withdrawing and retrograde motion of the stars according to the same
XLIIII Eiusdem de statu stellarum	44. On the position of the stars according to the same
XLV Eiusdem utrum sidera animam habeant	45. Which of the stars have a soul according to the same
XLVI Eiusdem de natura solis	46. On the nature of the sun according to the same
XLVII Bedae et Isidori de cursu et magnitudine solis	47. On the course and the magnitude of the sun according to Bede and Isidore
XLVIII Isidori et Calcidii de quantitate solis	48. On the strength of the sun according to Isidore and Calcidius
XLVIIII Isidori et Hygini de solis cursu	49. On the course of the sun according to Isidore and Hyginus
L Isidori de itinere solis	50. On the itinerary of the sun according to Isidore
LI Eiusdem de effectu solis	51. On the effect of the sun according to the same
LII Isidori et Bedae de eclipsis solis	52. On the solar eclipse according to Isidore and Bede
LIII Bedae de magnitudine uel defectu solis et lunae	53. On the magnitude or eclipsing of the sun and the moon according to Bede

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LIIII Macrobii Ambrosii de signis in sole	54. On the signs in the sun according to Macrobius Ambrosius
LV Bedae de natura et situ lunae	55. On the nature and location of the moon according to Bede
LVI Isidori et Hygini de cursu lunae	56. On the course of the moon according to Isidore and Hyginus
LVII Hygini et Isidori et Calcidii de eclipsis lunae	57. On the lunar eclipse according to Hyginus and Isidore and Calcidius
LVIII Plinii Secundi et Bedae ubi non sit eclipsis et quare	58. Where the eclipse does not occur and why according to Pliny the Elder and Bede
LVIIII Isidori de uicinitate lunae ad terras	59. On the closeness of the moon to the earth according to Isidore
LX De signis lunae	60. On the signs of the moon
LXI Isidori de stellis planetis	61. On the planets according to Isidore
LXII Bedae de cursu planetarum	62. On the course of the planets according to Bede
LXIII Eiusdem de ordine earum	63. On the order of these according to the same
LXIIII Isidori de positione septem stellarum errantium	64. On the position of the seven wandering stars according to Isidore
LXV Bedae et Macrobii Ambrosii de absidibus earum	65. On the orbits of these according to Bede and Macrobius Ambrosius
LXVI Bedae et Macrobii Ambrosii de planetis quare mutant colores	66. On the planets, why they change colours, according to Bede and Macrobius Ambrosius
LXVII Isidori et Hygini de stella Martis	67. On the planet Mars according to Isidore and Hyginus
LXVIII Hygini, Isidori et Fulgentii de stella Mercurii	68. On the planet Mercury according to Hyginus, Isidore, and Fulgentius
LXVIIII Eorundem de stella Iouis	69. On the planet Jupiter according to the same
LXX Eorundem de stella Ueneris	70. On the planet Venus according to the same
LXXI Eorundem de stella Saturni	71. On the planet Saturn according to the same
LXXII Hygini de tonis septem errantium	72. On the tone of the seven wandering stars

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LXXIII Bedae de duodecim signis	73. On the twelve zodiac signs according to Bede
LXXIIII Isidori, Hygini, et Aratum de primo signo Arietis	74. On the first sign Aries according to Isidore, Hyginus, and Aratus
LXXV Eorundem de secundo signo Tauri	75. On the second sign Taurus according to the same
LXXVI Eorundem de tercio signo Geminorum	76. On the third sign Gemini according to the same
LXXVII Eorundem de quarto signo Cancri	77. On the fourth sign Cancer according to the same
LXXVIII Eorundem de quinto signo Leonis	78. On the fifth sign Leo according to the same
LXXVIIII Eorundem de sexto signo Uirginis	79. On the sixth sign Virgo according to the same
LXXX Eorundem de septimo signo Librae et VIIIo Scorpionis	80. On the seventh sign Libra and the eighth Scorpio according to the same
LXXXI Eorundem de nono signo Sagittarii	81. On the ninth sign Sagittarius according to the same
LXXXII Eorundem de decimo signo Capricorni	82. On the tenth sign Capricorn according to the same
LXXXIII Eorundem de undecimo signo Aquarii	83. On the eleventh sign Aquarius according to the same
LXXXIIII Eorundem de duodecimo signo Piscium	84. On the twelfth sign Pisces according to the same
LXXXV Macrobii Ambrosii exce[r]ptum de astrologia	85. Excerpt on astrology according to Macrobius Ambrosius
LXXXVI De ceteris signis uersibus duodecim	86. On twelve further verses on the signs
LXXXVII Isidorii de nominibus astrorum	87. On the names of the stars according to Isidore
LXXXVIII Isidori, Hygini et Aratum de arcturo maiore	88. On Arcturus Major according to Isidore, Hyginus, and Aratus
LXXXVIIII Eorundem de arcturo minore	89. On the Arcturus Minor according to the same
xc Hygini et Arati de Dracone	90. On Draco according to Hyginus and Aratus
XCI Eorundem de Herculo	91. On Hercules according to the same
XCII Eorundem de Corona	92. On Corona according to the same

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XCIII Eorundem de Serpentario	93. On Serpentarius according to the same
XCIIII Isidori et Hygini de signo Boote	94. On the constellation Boötes according to Isidore and Hyginus
XCV Eorundem de Auriga	95. On Auriga according to the same
XCVI Hygini et Arati de Cepheo	96. On Cepheus according to Hyginus and Aratus
XCVII Eorundem de Casiepia	97. On Cassiopeia according to the same
XCVIII Eorundem de Andromeda	98. On Andromeda according to the same
XCVIIII Eorundem de Equo	99. On Equus according to the same
C Eorundem de Deltoton	100. On Deltoton according to the same
CI Fulgentii et Hygini de Perseo	101. On Perseus according to Fulgentius and Hyginus
CII Isidori de Pliade	102. On Pleiades according to Isidore
CIII Hygini de Lyra	103. On Lyra according to Hyginus
CIIII Eiusdem de Cigno	104. On Cygnus according to the same
CV Eiusdem de Sagitta	105. On Sagitta according to the same
CVI Eiusdem de Aquila	106. On Aquila according to the same
CVII Eiusdem de Delphino	107. On Delphinus according to the same
CVIII Isidori et Hygini de Orione	108. On Orion according to Isidore and Hyginus
CVIIII Eorundem de Canicula	109. On Canicula according to the same
CX Isidori de cometis stella	110. On the comets according to Isidore
CXI Hygini de Lepore	111. On Leporis according to Hyginus
CXII Hygini de Naui	112. On Navus according to Hyginus
CXIII Eiusdem de Coetu	113. On Cetus according to the same
CXIIII Eiusdem de Heridano	114. On Eridanus according to the same
CXV Arati de Pisce qui auster dicitur	115. On Piscis, which is called Auster, according to Aratus
CXVI Hygini de Ara	116. On Ara according to Hyginus
CXVII Eiusdem de Centauro	117. On Centaurus according to the same

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CXVIII Eiusdem de Hydra	118. On Hydra according to the same
CXVIIII Eiusdem de Anticano	119. On Anticanus according to the same
CXX Macrobii Ambrosii de circulis signiferis	120. On the circles of the constellations according to Macrobius Ambrosius
CXXI Isidori de errore gentilium	121. On the error of the gentiles according to Isidore
CXXII De expositio Calcidii in Timeum Platonis	122. On the exposition of Calcidius on the Timaeus by Plato

The Vatican encyclopaedia demonstrates at least two crucial aspects. First, the Carolingian centre around the Aachen palace school of the early decades of the 9th century did not dominate the scientific thought of later decades. The centre's preference for Bede was not necessarily met by the developing intellectual hubs in other regions of the disintegrating empire, like Fleury and St Gall. In these monasteries, the Isidorian voice was stronger. Second, though Bede remained Isidore's (and the Irish's) main rival for what at this stage may be classified as traditional computistical thought, in the newly emerging discipline of astronomy a more serious challenge was posed by the revival of Isidore's predecessors, the late antique authors Pliny, Hyginus, Calcidius, Macrobius, Aratus (and Martianus Capella).

5 Revival of Isidorian Thought in the 10th and 11th Centuries (Isidore's Easter Table Continued)

Post-Carolingian computus (and thus Isidorian influence) is difficult to assess because of the sheer wealth of unclassified material: hundreds if not thousands of computistical manuscripts of the 9th to the 11th centuries have survived that await systematic analysis. From what is known at present, Isidore's Easter table received some sort of a revival between the mid-10th and the mid-12th centuries, in two phases.

The first phase, connected to the famous Abbo of Fleury, certainly is the more curious of the two. Towards the end of the 10th century, Abbo kicked off a trend of recalculating the incarnation era. Eight such attempts produced between the late 11th and the mid-12th centuries are well known to modern scholarship; a ninth awaits a thorough study.[126] The authors of these recalculations

126 See most recently, Peter Verbist, *Duelling with the past: medieval authors and the problems of the Christian era, c. 990–1135* (Turnhout: 2010); C. Philipp E. Nothaft, *Dating the passion:*

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are classified as the "critical computists" in recent historiography.[127] Since the introduction of the Alexandrian Easter reckoning in the Latin West through Dionysius Exiguus's table, the incarnation era introduced (or copied) by Dionysius puzzled computists. In the 7th century, adherents of the Victorian reckoning confronted followers of Dionysius with the fact that for any potential year of Christ's resurrection, AD 31 or 34 (depending on the Gospel tradition followed), the Dionysiac reckoning produced data contrary to the Gospels (which indicated crucifixion on *luna* 14 or 15, resurrection on *luna* 16 or 17). Bede tried to browse over this problem with sarcasm and reference to authority.[128] Abbo then accused Bede of scholarly misconduct or tired- and laziness, as he had identified the problem but had not even tried to find a solution.[129] Abbo's thoughts on this question developed in two stages.[130] The first may be described as a chronographical solution: When inspecting Eusebius's chronicle (in Jerome's translation), Abbo realised that three years are missing in Dionysius's count of the period from Christ's birth to the accession of Diocletian; he therefore added three years to Dionysius's AD count and then constructed a new Easter table (for which see below) that produced resurrection data in accordance with the Gospels and Patristic tradition for the year 34 in his new count. Abbo's second attempt was chronological, based on the cyclical characteristics of the 532-year Easter cycle: The combined evidence of the Gospels and Latin Patristic tradition indicated that the resurrection had taken place on Sunday, 27 March, *luna* 17. In the 532-year Easter cycle, only the 13th year

the life of Jesus and the emergence of scientific chronology (*200–1600*) (Leiden: 2012), 103–12.

127 For the terminology, see Wiesenbach, *Sigebert*, 64–65; Borst, *Kalenderreform*, 326–35.

128 Bede, *De temporum ratione* 47, 61 (Jones, *Bedae opera*, 265–68, 281–83).

129 See the passages cited by Verbist, *Duelling*, 42, 46, 57–58, 73.

130 See esp. Verbist, *Duelling*, 35–84; Peter Verbist, "Abbo of Fleury and the computational accuracy of the Christian era," in *Time and eternity: the medieval discourse*, eds. Gerhard Jaritz and Gerson Moreno-Riaño (Turnhout: 2003), 63–80; Peter Verbist, "Abbon de Fleury et l'ère chrétienne vers l'an mil: un esprit critique vis-à-vis d'une tradition erronée," in *Abbon de Fleury: philosophie, science et comput autour de l'an mil*, ed. Barbara Obrist (Paris: 2006), 61–94. See also van de Vyver, "Les oeuvres inédite," 154–58; Alfred Cordoliani, "Abbon de Fleury, Hériger de Lobbes et Gerland de Besançon sur l'ère de l'incarnation de Denys le Petit," *Revue d'histoire ecclésiastique* 44 (1949), 464–69; Alfred Cordoliani, "Les manuscrits de la bibliothèque de Berne provenant de l'abbaye de Fleury au XIe siècle: le comput d'Abbon," *Zeitschrift für Schweizerische Kirchengeschichte = Revue d'histoire ecclésiastique suisse* 52 (1958), 146–48; Eva-Maria Engelen, *Zeit, Zahl und Bild: Studien zur Verbindung von Philosophie und Wissenschaft bei Abbo von Fleury* (Berlin: 1993), 149–51; Nadja Germann, *De temporum ratione: quadrivium und Gotteserkenntnis am Beispiel Abbos von Fleury und Hermanns von Reichenau* (Leiden: 2006), 114–16, 145–46; Nadja Germann, "Zwischen veritas naturae und fides historiae: Zeit und Dauer bei Abbo von Fleury," in *Das Sein der Dauer*, eds. Andreas Speer and David Wirmer (Berlin: 2008), 171–95.

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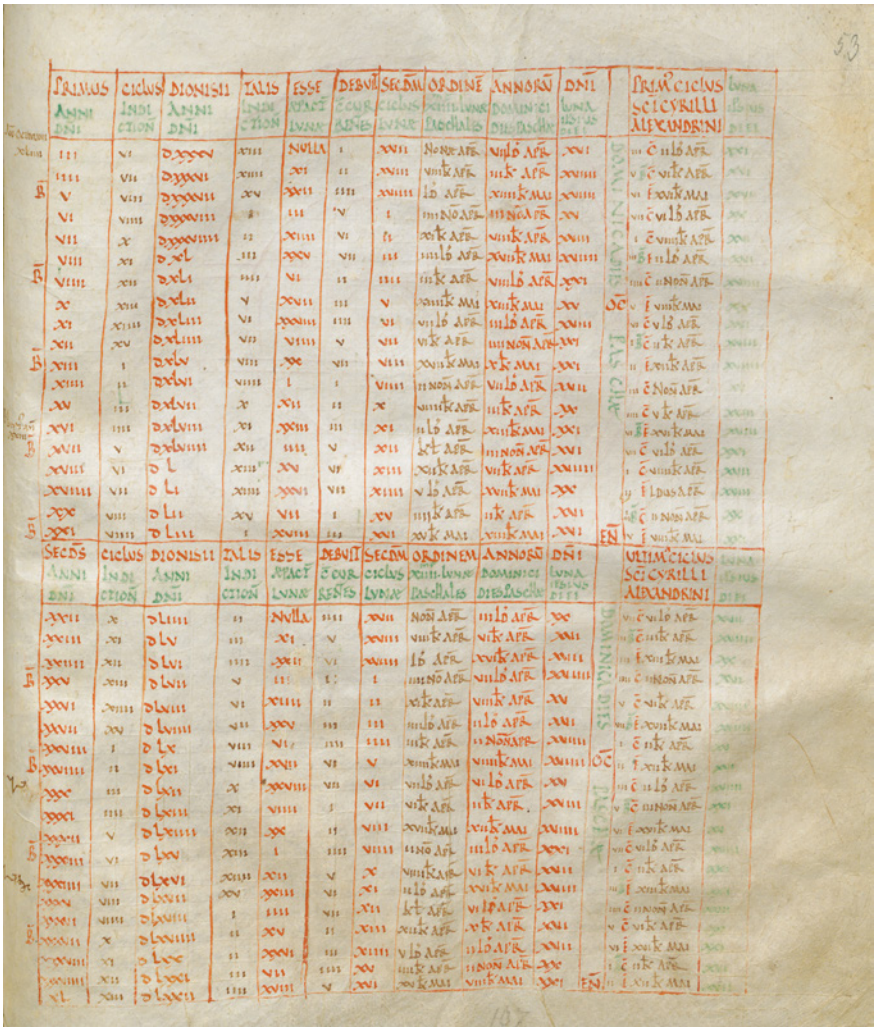


FIGURE 16.2 Berlin SBPK Phillipps 1833, 53r

displayed these required data for Easter Sunday, which was equivalent to AD 12 according to Dionysius. Abbo took this as the 33rd year of his new count, adding 21 years to Dionysius.

In both recalibrations of the incarnation era (and especially in the first), Abbo made use of a *Cyclus Sancti Cyrilli Alexandrini*, a 95-year Easter table of which the first and the last 19 years are reproduced beside Abbo's newly constructed Easter table of his first attempt (Dionysius's AD + 3).[131] The format

131 Edited in Verbist, *Duelling*, 48–49; see below the facsimile of Berlin SBPK Phillipps 1833 (Fleury, *saec.* $x^{2/2}$; online at: https://digital.staatsbibliothek-berlin.de/werkansicht?

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alone suggests that Abbo's exemplar was an Isidorian Easter table (with concurrents added). In fact, what Abbo had in front of him was Isidore's Easter table updated to AD 627–721.[132]

In the separate transmission of only Isidore's Easter table, the ascription to Cyril rather than Isidore himself certainly was not uncommon (as will be seen below), and it is worth recalling that *Etym*. 6.17.10–32 is transmitted as a letter of Cyril in the Bobbio Computus.[133] The 9th-century Fleury codex London BL Harley 3017 transmits Isidore's Easter table updated to AD 627–721, though the table is not there ascribed to Cyril.[134] The same table was also copied in another 9th-century Fleury manuscript, Paris BnF Lat. 5543, as part of a longer excerpt of *Etym*. 6.17 not identified as Isidore's composition.[135] The first page of the table (145r) contains at the bottom a continuation from the previous page of the passage that precedes the table in *Etym*. 6.17. This continuation, right underneath the table, begins *beatissimus Cyrillus Alexandrinae urbis episcopus*, which could have led to an identification of the table as a work of Cyril. Abbo worked from this table, either from these two surviving Fleury copies, or from a now lost version with a more direct attribution to Cyril.

If, therefore, Abbo is direct proof of interest in and application of Isidore's Easter table around the year AD 1000, he also hampered the reception of Isidore's computistical definitions and explanations. Under Abbo, computus became more schematised. All basic information was now pressed into a tabular format or was otherwise visually displayed. This shift from text to table certainly worked against Isidore. On the other hand, the 11th century was destined for a revival of interest in at least Isidore's Easter table, in a second, post-Abbonian phase. In the second half of the 11th century, the limits of traditional computistics became apparent, especially through the works of Hermann of

PPN=PPN83017379X&PHYSID=PHYS_0001&DMDID=). For Abbo's application of this table, see Verbist, *Duelling*, 47–52, 55–56, 58–59, 62, 65, 77–78.

132 Verbist, *Duelling*, 47, mistakenly believes that Isidore's original table covered AD 627–721, a claim that goes back to van der Hagen, *Observationes*, 241, and was popularised by Ludwig Ideler, *Handbuch der mathematischen und technischen Chronologie*, 2 vols (Berlin: 1825–26), 2: 290. It also found its way into the most recent Italian and English translations: Angelo Valastro Canale, *Isidoro di Siviglia, Etimologie o Origini*, 2 vols (Turin: 2006), 501, n. 60; and Priscilla Throop, *Isidore of Seville's Etymologies*, 2 vols (Charlotte: 2005), no pagination: "judging by the dates given for Easter, Isidore uses the tables for the years 627–721"; Stephen A. Barney, W.J. Lewis, J.A. Beach, and Oliver Berghof, *The Etymologies of Isidore of Seville* (Cambridge: 2006), 143–44.

133 See pp. 469–70 above.

134 London BL Harley 3017, 50r-51r (Fleury?, AD 860s?). For this table, see Charles W. Jones, "Two Easter tables," *Speculum* 13 (1938), 204. Jones only knew the Harley, not the Paris table discussed below, and was not aware of its Isidorian connection; see Warntjes, *Munich Computus*, XC–XCI. See now Warntjes, "Continuation."

135 See n. 41.

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Reichenau and the Lotharingian Gerland.[136] The 19-year lunar cycle, the basis of early-medieval Easter calculations and the unshakable centre of Abbo's chronological thought-world, was seriously called into question. The awareness of its limitations led to an intensive search for alternatives. Eventually, this paved the way for the adoption of new, Arabic science in the Latin West. More specifically, from the first half of the 12th century, the Muslim and the Jewish 30-year lunar calendars were compared with the traditional system, particularly in southern Germany.[137] Before this new science became available, alternatives were sought in the past rather than in other cultures.

This may be one explanation for the increasing antiquarianism in the 11th century. A good example for the engagement with late antique calendrical models is the (unpublished) 11th-century gloss to chapter 11 of Bede's *De temporum ratione* from Tegernsee (Munich BSB Clm 18156, 16v), in which the author compared the Easter reckonings of Dionysius Exiguus, Victorius of Aquitaine, and Anatolius Latinus. In this environment, a revival of interest in Isidore's Easter table appears like a natural reflex, especially when it was transmitted outside of its immediate Isidorian context. In that case, it appeared like an archaic 95-year Easter cycle, potentially the one famously attributed to Cyril of Alexandria. Certainly, because of the lack of AD dates, it was not immediately apparent that this table refers to the same reckoning as the standard Dionysiac one. But Isidore's table also appealed to those who knew better. As established above, Isidore's original table covered the years AD 532–626. The Easter cycle represented by this 95-year Easter table was of 532 years. Therefore, the Isidorian table was outdated after AD 626 but regained currency in AD 1064, when it could be applied again for the subsequent 95 years.

That this theory is not mere speculation is demonstrated by the codex Zürich ZB Rh. 83, 14r-17v.[138] It was originally composed in the monastery of Kempten (an offshoot of St Gall) around AD 1000. In the first quarter of the 11th

136 The computistical works of Hermann of Reichenau are currently being prepared for the MGH series *Studien zur Geistesgeschichte des Mittelalters*; cf. Immo Warntjes, "Hermann der Lahme und die Zeitrechnung. Bedeutung seiner *computistica* und Forschungsperspektiven," in *Hermann der Lahme: Reichenauer Mönch und Universalgelehrter*, eds. Felix Heinzer and Thomas Zotz (Stuttgart: 2016), 285–321. Gerland's Computus is readily accessible in Alfred Lohr, *Der Computus Gerlandi* (Stuttgart: 2013).

137 C. Philipp E. Nothaft, "The reception and application of Arabic science in twelfth-century computistics: new evidence from Bavaria," *Journal for the History of Astronomy* 44 (2013), 35–60; C. Philipp E. Nothaft, "Roman vs. Arabic computistics in twelfth-century England: a newly discovered source (Collatio compoti Romani et Arabici)," *Early Science and Medicine* 20 (2015), 187–208.

138 For descriptions of this manuscript, see Borst, *Reichskalender*, 231–32; Leo Cunibert Mohlberg, *Katalog der Handschriften der Zentralbibliothek Zürich, I. Mittelalterliche*

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century, the codex was transferred to Rheinau. The section in question here, 14r-17v, constitutes a separate quaternion and was added later. The table was introduced by the words:

> Cyclum hunc quinquies per decemnovenalem ductum beatus Cyrillus Alexandrinę urbis episcopus adinvenit. In quo per XCV annos diem sancti paschę cum luna ipsius absque dubio invenies.

There are annal entries for the years equivalent to AD 1117, 1128, 1141, 1145, and 1148. Thus, in southern Germany in the second half of the 11th century, where the basis of Christian time-reckoning was called into question, the Isidorian Easter table received some attention because of its ascription to a late antique authority (Cyril of Alexandria) and its alleged 95-year cyclic period. When it was recognised as a representative of the Alexandrian-Dionysiac reckoning, which was the undisputed standard throughout Christendom, it was used for recording relevant events. Only a systematic study of 11th-century computistical manuscripts will reveal whether this 11th-century Isidorian Easter table is an isolated example or represents a broader trend.

6 Epilogue: Isidore in the Computistical Tradition of the Iberian Peninsula

The diligent reader will have realised that the forgoing study has principally outlined Isidorian influence on early medieval computistical literature outside of Isidore's native Spain (or rather the Iberian Peninsula). The evidence for the Iberian Peninsula is relatively sparse. It appears that Pope Vigilius's letter to Bishop Profoturus of Braga of AD 538 initiated a century-long Easter controversy which centred on the question of whether Victorius or Dionysius provided the more appropriate system for the calculation of Easter, as witnessed by the paschal letters of the monk Leo and Braulio of Zaragoza.[139] By AD 650, not accidentally coinciding with contemporary developments in Rome, the debate was settled in favour of Dionysius. After this time, the evidence becomes even sparser.

Two documents stand out and deserve closer examination. The first is a layer dateable to AD 663 in Paris BnF Lat. 609, a 9th-century codex written in

Handschriften (Zürich: 1932), 196–97; Jacob Werner, "Die ältesten Hymnensammlungen von Rheinau," *Mitteilungen der antiquarischen Gesellschaft* 23 (1891), 81–84.

139 Cf. n. 17.

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a Visigothic hand.[140] The dating clause seems to apply to the entire section of folios 71r-88v. This Computus of AD 663 is the first major surviving computistical text produced on the Iberian Peninsula,[141] and therefore is our prime witness for 7th-century Iberian computistical thought. This highly original work draws mainly on Dionysius's computistical writings, but also on Isidore's definitions: for example, Isidore's etymology for epacts (*Etym*. 6.17.29) is cited on fol. 78v; his etymology of *intercalares* (*Etym*. 6.17.28) on fols 79v-80r; the placement of the epact on 22 March (*Etym*. 6.17.31) on fol. 80r; his definition of *bissextus* (*Etym*. 6.17.26 and 27) on fol. 86r-v; his definition of *ciclum* (*Etym* 6.17.3–4) on fols 86v-87r; and his discussion of the pasch (*Etym*. 6.17.11–12) on fol. 87r-v. In general, however, most of the text is of a technical nature and contains numerous calendrical algorithms, and therefore draws rather strongly on Dionysius. For the present study, this text is of considerable importance for three main reasons: (1) it proves that Isidore is cited in computistical literature as early as AD 663; (2) it shows that *Etym*. 6.17 (*De ciclo paschali*) received an almost immediate reception in his native Iberia; and (3) it suggests that Isidore's impact on 7th-century Iberian computistical thought was extremely limited, not comparable to his defining role in the insular world.

The second document of major importance for early medieval Iberian computistics is the tract termed *Prologus Aquitanus* (*Prol. Aquit.*) by its most recent editor, Arno Borst.[142] The title is misleading, as the text is better placed in the Iberian Peninsula proper rather than in Aquitaine.[143] It survives in only one manuscript, the 11th-century Ripoll MS (Vatican BAV Lat. 123) that preserves the 9th-century computistical encyclopaedia from the Loire Valley (probably Fleury) discussed above. In this encyclopaedia, the tract constitutes book 2 chapter 45. It is dated to AD 721, which by itself is a very suggestive date: In this

140 A not entirely readable scan of this manuscript can be found at: http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b9076522d. For this codex, see Walter Goffart, "The supposedly 'Frankish' table of nations: an edition and study," *Frühmittelalterliche Studien* 17 (1983), 103–04; Alden Mosshammer, "The *Praefatio* (*Prologus*) *Sancti Cyrilli de Paschate* and the 437-year (not 418!) paschal list attributed to Theophilus," *Vigilae Christianae* 67 (2013), 64–67; Warntjes, "Köln," 78–79. A full-scale study of the manuscript is being prepared by Alden Mosshammer.

141 Earlier computistical texts that have survived from Iberia include: the paschal letters mentioned in n. 17; the tract *De pascha* attributed to Martin of Braga is not from his pen (Pierre David, "Saint Martin de Braga est-il l'auteur d'un traité de comput pascal?," *Revista de Archivos, Bibliotecas y Museos* 62 (1956), 685–97), whereas the treatise *Quo tempore initium mundi* may well be; a treatise entitled *Expositio Bissexti*. Critical edition of these last two texts will be published by Alden Mosshammer shortly. A monograph on early Iberian computistics by Alden Mosshammer and myself is in preparation.

142 Borst, *Schriften*, 329–47.

143 Warntjes, "Köln," 78–79.

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year, the 95-year Easter table of AD 626–721 expired, which made recalculation for the subsequent 95-year period (or longer) necessary. In fact, the tract is quite specific about its purpose, serving as a prologue to a Dionysiac Easter table covering the years AD 722–919 (the end date was determined by the next occurrence of Easter Sunday on its latest possible date, 25 April). Isidorian influence is very difficult to identify. The mention of 22 March as the placement of the epacts in chapter 3D may hint at Isidore, as he was the first author to specify this date, at least judging from the surviving evidence. But then the wording does not show direct dependence, and in the AD 720s this information certainly was common knowledge. More interesting is the second part of this text, if Borst's edition is followed. Borst considers chapters 45 and 46 of book 2 of the mid-9th-century encyclopaedia in Vatican Reg. lat. 123 as two parts of the same text. The first editor of this tract, Charles W. Jones, however, rightly put more faith in the compiler's chapter divisions.[144] The wording is strikingly different, and whereas the tract proper, chapter 45, constitutes a highly original text, the following chapter only consists of verbatim citations. The main such quotation is *Etym*. 6.17.1–4, Isidore's brief account on the history of Easter cycles. Interestingly, this short quotation has its own transmission history,[145] and should therefore be considered a separate tract here as well.

These two key texts have much more to offer than providing us with an insight into the (limited) influence of Isidorian thought on Iberian computistica. These texts reveal distinctive characteristics of Iberian computistics, like Alexandrian/Dionysiac Julian calendar limits for Easter Sunday as 22 March–24 April + 25 April (i.e. 25 April being considered an exception), the placement of the epacts on 31 December, and the *feria qua ducit annum* (the weekday of 1 January, + 1 in bissextile years), but also the Hispanic era. None of these can be found in Isidore's treatment of the subject. Isidore can thus be safely placed outside of the discernable Visigothic computistical tradition. He had no interest in the subject, did not engage with the key issues outlined by his contemporaries, and leaves no mark on Iberian computistical thought. This is extremely apparent in later manuscripts in Visigothic script, the most famous being El Escorial RB d.I.2 and d.I.1, León AC 8, and Paris BnF nal 2169.[146] They principally

144 Charles W. Jones in CCSL 123, 691–97.

145 Isidore, *Etymologiae* 6.17.1–4, is transmitted separately in, e.g., Bobbio Computus 156; Munich BSB Clm 14725, 6r-v; Melk SB 412 (*olim* G 32), 192; Cologne DB 83-II, 79v; Karlsruhe BLB Aug. perg. 229, 28v (*Etym*. 6.17.1–3); London BL Harley 3017, 74v-75r (*Etym*. 6.17.1). Paris BnF Lat. 5543, 144v-145r preserves this passage as part of a longer section of *Etym*. 6.17.1–20 (cf. n. 41 above).

146 El Escorial RB d.I.2 (*Codex Albeldensis seu Vigilanus*; final third of the 10th century; San Martín de Albelda); El Escorial RB d.I.1 (*Codex Aemilianensis*; very late 10th century; San Millán de la Cogolla); León AC 8 (1069; León); Paris BnF nal 2169 (1072; San Sebastián de

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preserve computistica from the early 9th to the 11th century. These are heavily influenced by Carolingian thought but also include traditional Visigothic features. Isidore, on the other hand, is tellingly absent.

7 Conclusion

Isidore's influence on the early medieval science of computus may be summarised, chronologically, as follows:

1. In book 6, chapter 17, of his *Etymologiae*, Isidore copied a 95-year Alexandrian Easter table from an unknown source. Isidore's treatment of this table as cyclic, even though the recorded data as basic as the 4-year bissextile cycle proved the opposite at a glance, reveal the bishop of Seville as a rather limited calendrical scientist. Isidore's table (and, no doubt, his exemplar) covered the years AD 532–626. It was divided into five sections of 19 years. The first of these was very soon adapted to AD 627–45, resulting in a hybrid table covering AD 627–45 + AD 551–626. Braulio of Zaragoza may have been involved in the process, but this needs further study. Precisely because of its non-cyclic character (*pace* Isidore), the table itself was frequently adapted to the present time of the copyist. Traces of such reworkings of the table can be detected for AD 632/655, 721, 779–97, 855–73. A detailed analysis of all 8th- to 10th-century copies of the *Etymologiae* will surely reveal many more stages of adaption, which will shed a bright and unparalleled light on the reception of the *Etymologiae*.
2. The *Etymologiae* were circulated very widely almost immediately after their production.[147] Their first use in strictly computistical literature can be dated to AD 663 in Isidore's native Iberian Peninsula. On the other hand, the earliest Visigothic computistical texts show very distinctive technical features. None of these is shared by Isidore, who can therefore safely be placed outside of the Visigothic computistical tradition.
3. In computistical terms, Isidore had the biggest impact in Ireland. Ireland can be regarded as the cradle of the medieval science of computus, and Isidore played a major role in its formation there. In the second half of the 7th century, Irish scientists invented the computistical textbook, a comprehensive guide to this new science. The textbooks were typically

Silos). For these manuscripts, see Joan Gómez Pallarès, *Studia chronologica: estudios sobre manuscritos de cómputo* (Madrid: 1999).

147 See the chapter by Jacques Elfassi in this volume.

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divided into three sections: on solar and lunar theory, and the combination of the two, Easter calculation. Isidore provided the structure and much of the content, principally definitions, for the first of these (solar theory). Authors like Bede and, later, Hrabanus Maurus followed Irish precedents in two different ways. They produced comprehensive computistical textbooks in the Irish tradition, but applied a distinctive structure, which was ultimately based on 7th-century Irish tracts discussing the various divisions of time, from the atom or moment to the world ages or the cosmos. The nucleus of this structure can be found in Isidore's writings.

4. The Carolingian period (*c.*AD 750–850) constitutes the height of the science of computus. The computistical formulary became more dominant, the calendar tradition took off as an omnipresent phenomenon, and the computistical encyclopaedia was invented. Isidorian thought played a very minor role in computistical formularies, as this genre was a century older than Isidore's writings and the bishop of Seville himself did not engage with it in any way. Likewise, the *calendarium* owed to pre-Isidorian Roman models and its limited blank spaces (one line per day) came to be filled with Bede and Pliny; still, Isidorian concepts can be detected in the earliest, 8th-century specimen of this genre. The *encyclopaediae* reveal a very notable predilection towards Bede at Charlemagne's palace school, sidelining Irish thought and its Isidorian foundation.
5. In the context of the fragmentation of the Carolingian Empire in the second half of the 9th century, the scientific centres of the former periphery developed into major intellectual hubs with their own interests and preferences. Especially regions traditionally influenced by Irish thought, like the Loire Valley and the Lake Constance area, gave Isidore more scope than the Carolingian centre had been prepared to do a few decades earlier. This period also saw the rise of new subjects. Astronomy did not remain an ancillary science to computus, but with the introduction of a number of late antique authors (Pliny, Hyginus, Macrobius, Martianus Capella) providing astronomical accounts of considerable length, it became a subject in its own right. The second half of book 3 of the *Etymologiae*, appropriately entitled *De astronomia*, was an obvious starting point. But the more material became available, the more Isidore was eclipsed, for the same reason as for computus: Isidore principally defined; he did not explain, conceptualise, or calculate.
6. The 10th century saw a notable shift in computus, from a principally text-based to a table-based science (still to be studied in detail). This left even less room for Isidorian thought.

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7. Still, the late 10th and 11th centuries appear to have been more favourable to Isidore. It was realised that the traditional methods of time-reckoning did not operate with a sufficient level of precision, or ran counter to theological authority. Alternatives were sought, both in the past and in different cultures. Texts like *De ratione paschali* by Anatolius Latinus were studied before Arabic and Hebrew science provided serious alternatives. Isidore's Easter table, lacking a linear timeline (especially AD), thus appeared archaic. Abbo of Fleury mistook it (in an updated version of AD 627–721) for the Easter table of Cyril of Alexandria (†AD 444), and tried to use it for his recalculation of the incarnation era. Only closer inspection revealed that the underlying system was the same as that unanimously used in Western Christianity, the Alexandrian-Dionysiac system. But then, Isidore's table could be applied again for Easter calculation: The Alexandrian-Dionysiac reckoning was cyclic in 532 years; thus, Isidore's orginal table of AD 532–626 also worked for AD 1064–1158. Whether there was as much of an Isidorian revival in the 11th century, however, still needs to be investigated.[148]

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CHAPTER 17

Isidore in the Carolingian and Ottonian Worlds: Encyclopaedism and Etymology, *c.* 800–1050

Sinéad O'Sullivan

1 Introduction

Isidore's *Etymologiae*, the "Grundbuch des ganzen Mittelalters,"[1] attests to the importance of the encyclopaedic and etymological traditions within medieval intellectual culture. Isidore's antiquarianism and penchant for collecting made him an authority in the medieval West and ensured his *floruit* in the Carolingian and Ottonian worlds. In particular, his scholarly methods, already discussed in previous chapters, were widely deployed by early medieval writers and provide insight into the intellectual context of his reception. This paper focuses on the use of Isidore by glossators and commentators from the 9th to the early 11th centuries. It highlights his significance as demonstrated by glosses on a range of heavily glossed pagan and Christian authors. Isidore was regarded as an authority and functioned as a source of information, including on Greek words. More importantly, through examination of glosses this study considers the influence of Isidore's intellectual inheritance on early medieval scholarly culture.

Whilst discussion and debate surround Isidorian studies, there is consensus about the speed of dissemination of some of his writings, his pervasive influence, and the significance of his methods.[2] Questions remain about whether or not there was direct or indirect dispatch of Isidore's works from Spain to Ireland and from Ireland to Britain,[3] and whether his knowledge of classical

1 Ernst R. Curtius, "Mittelalterliche Literaturtheorien," *Zeitschrift für romanische Philologie* 62 (1942), 475.

2 However, as Marina Smyth, "Isidorian texts in seventh-century Ireland," in *Isidore of Seville and his Reception in the Early Middle Ages: Transmitting and Transforming Knowledge*, eds. Jamie Wood and Andrew Fear (Amsterdam: 2016), 111–30 has shown, there was limited transmission of a number of Isidore's works until the eighth century.

3 For a recent summary of the debate, including a survey of the debt of "early medieval Irish or Irish-influenced exegetical learning" to Isidore, see Claudia Di Sciacca, *Finding the right words: Isidore's "Synonyma" in Anglo-Saxon England* (London: 2008), 37–76. For direct transmission, see Jocelyn N. Hillgarth, "The East, Visigothic Spain and the Irish," in *Papers presented*

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literature was first- or second-hand.[4] The evidence strongly suggests that at least some of Isidore's works were in circulation in the insular and continental worlds by the late 7th century.[5] The studies of Marina Smyth, Immo Warntjes, and Roy Flechner show familiarity with Isidore's *Etymologiae* and *De ecclesiasticis officiis*, for example, in Ireland by the end of the 7th and early 8th centuries.[6] As for the manuscript evidence, two groups of early fragments for the *Etymologiae* are extant in St Gallen, Stiftsbibliothek 1399 a. 1, dated to the 7th century, and in the flyleaves of Longleat House, Marquess of Bath, NMR 10589, dated to the late 7th or early 8th century.[7] Already by the 7th century Isidore

to the third international conference on patristic studies held at Christ Church, Oxford, 1959, ed. Frank L. Cross (Berlin: 1957), 442–56. For transmission via France, see Charles H. Beeson, *Isidor-Studien*, Quellen und Untersuchungen zur lateinischen Philologie des Mittelalters 4 (Munich: 1913), 120–22.

4 That Isidore acquired his knowledge of many of his sources at second hand has been noted by many. See, esp., Jacques Fontaine, *Isidore de Seville et la culture classique dans l'Espagne wisigothique* (Paris: 1959), vol. 2, 742–62; Jocelyn N. Hillgarth, "The position of Isidorian studies: a critical review of the literature 1936–1975," *Studi medievali*, 3rd Series, 24 (1983), 845–53; Manuel C. Díaz y Díaz, "La trasmisión de los textos antiguos en la peninsula Ibérica en los siglos VII–XI," *Settimane di studio del Centro italiano sull'alto medioevo* 22 (1975), 138–40; Stephen A. Barney, W.J. Lewis, Jennifer A. Beach, and Oliver Berghof, *The "Etymologies" of Isidore of Seville* (Cambridge: 2006), 10–17. Various arguments have been developed regarding Isidore's appropriation of antique learning, ranging from a wider Christian repurposing of the classical past to the importance of the Visigothic context. See Jacques Fontaine, "Isidorus Varro Christianus," in *Bivium. Homenaje a Manuel Cecilio Díaz y Díaz* (Madrid: 1983), 89–106; Di Sciacca, *Finding the right words*, 8; Barney, *et al. The Etymologies*, 16; Jamie Wood, *The Politics of Identity in Visigothic Spain: Religion and Power in the Histories of Isidore of Seville* (Leiden: 2012), 56.

5 See Martin Ryan's chapter in this volume for an examination of Isidore's reception in England and Ireland.

6 Marina Smyth, "Isidorian texts in seventh-century Ireland," re-evaluates the evidence for the reception of Isidore in seventh-century Ireland and cautions against the assumption that certain works of Isidore were available by circa 650. She argues that several of Isidore's works were available by the late seventh century. See also Immo Warntjes, *The Munich computus: Text and translation: Irish computistics between Isidore of Seville and the Venerable Bede and its reception in Carolingian times* (Stuttgart: 2010). Roy Flechner, *The Hibernensis: A study, edition, and translation, with notes* (PhD dissertation, Oxford: 2011). The reference to Flechner's work on the *Canones Hibernenses* and the borrowings from Isidore are derived from Marina Smyth's paper mentioned above.

7 The discovery of the St. Gall fragments was first published by Alban Dold and Johannes Duft, *Die älteste irische Handschriften-Reliquie der Stiftsbibliothek St. Gallen mit Texten aus Isidors Etymologien* (Beuron: 1955). Their origin has been attributed by E.A. Lowe to an Irish centre on the Continent, probably Bobbio, and by Bernhard Bischoff to Ireland. See E.A. Lowe, *Codices Latini Antiquiores: A Palaeographical Guide to Latin Manuscripts Prior to the Ninth Century*, vol. 7 (Oxford: 1956), no. 995; Bernhard Bischoff, "Die europäische Verbreitung der

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was known outside the Iberian Peninsula,[8] and Isidorian pseudepigrapha were being compiled.[9] By the 8th century, ascriptions to Isidore not found in his

Werke Isidors von Sevilla," in *Mittelalterliche Studien: Ausgewählte Aufsätze zur Schriftkunde und Literaturgeschichte*, vol. 1 (Stuttgart: 1966), 180–81; Bernhard Bischoff, "Eine verschollene Einteilung der Wissenschaften," in *Mittelalterliche Studien*, vol. 1, 285, n. 43. The Longleat House flyleaves were analysed in James P. Carley and Ann Dooley, "An early Irish fragment of Isidore of Seville's *Etymologiae*," in *The archaeology and history of Glastonbury abbey: Essays in honour of the ninetieth birthday of C.A. Ralegh Radford*, eds. Lesley Abrams and James P. Carley (Woodbridge: 1991), 137, 144. See also Baudoin Van den Abeele, "La tradition manuscrite des *Étymologies* d'Isidore de Séville," *Cahiers de recherches médiévales et humanistes* 16 (2008), 199.

8 For example, computistical evidence demonstrates familiarity with Isidore by the late seventh century in Ireland. Dáibhí Ó Cróinín's original assessment that Isidore may have been available by the mid seventh century is modified by the findings of Immo Warntjes who dates various Irish computistical texts to the late seventh and early eighth centuries. See Dáibhí Ó Cróinín, "A seventh-century Irish computus from the circle of Cummianus," *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy* 82 C (1982), 423–24; Warntjes, *The Munich computus*, lx; Warntjes, "A newly discovered prologue of AD. 699 to the Easter Table of Victorius of Aquitaine in an unknown Sirmond manuscript," *Peritia* 21 (2010), 255–84. Seventh-century Hiberno-Latin writings display indebtedness to Isidore. And the seventh-century writer, Virgilius Maro Grammaticus, who had close connections to the Irish, appears to have drawn upon the *Etymologiae*. See Di Sciacca, *Finding the right words*, 38–39, 47. Early knowledge of Isidore in Anglo-Saxon England is furnished by the Canterbury biblical commentaries, dated to the period *ca.* 650–750, and by the Épinal-Erfurt glossary, dated to the last quarter of the 7th century. See *Biblical commentaries from the Canterbury school of Theodore and Hadrian*, ed. Bernhard Bischoff and Michael Lapidge (Cambridge: 1994), 1; Michael Lapidge, "An Isidorian epitome from Anglo-Saxon England," in *Anglo-Latin literature, 600–899*, ed. Michael Lapidge (London: 1996), 190–91; Di Sciacca, *Finding the right words*, 47; Michael W. Herren, "The transmission and reception of Graeco-Roman mythology in Anglo-Saxon England," *Anglo-Saxon England* 27 (1998), 90–91, 97–98; Loredana Lazzari, "Isidore's *Etymologiae* in Anglo-Saxon glossaries," in *Foundations of learning: the transfer of encyclopaedic knowledge in the early Middle Ages*, eds. Rolf H. Bremmer Jr and Kees Dekker (Paris: 2007), 63–93. For the Continent, the earliest knowledge of the *Etymologiae* at Corbie can be dated to the second half of the seventh century. See Bischoff, "Verbreitung," 176.

9 For the important role of the Irish in the development of Isidorian pseudepigrapha, see Robert E. McNally, "Isidorian pseudepigrapha in the early Middle Ages," in *Isidoriana: colección de estudios sobre Isidoro de Sevilla*, ed. Manuel C. Díaz y Díaz (León: 1961), 305–16. There is a growing body of evidence that several Isidorian works were avidly read and used in early medieval Ireland. See, esp., Michael W. Herren, "On the earliest Irish acquaintance with Isidore," in *Visigothic Spain: New approaches*, ed. Edward James (Oxford: 1980), 243–50. Marina Smyth offers some qualifications, based on her analysis of cosmographical materials, however: Marina Smyth, "Isidore of Seville and early Irish cosmography," *Cambridge Medieval Celtic Studies* 14 (1987), 69–102 and Marina Smyth, "Isidorian texts in seventh-century Ireland."

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writings appear in Irish computistical texts attesting to his reputation.[10] In addition, Irish grammatical and vernacular writings show indebtedness to the Spanish compiler; Isidore is a source for the *Florilegium frisingense*, a compendium of Irish exegetical material;[11] he is glossed in Old English;[12] he is used by prominent scholars, such as Bede and by Anglo-Saxon missionaries;[13] his writings appear in Frankish centres and are excerpted in florilegia;[14] and the pace of his dissemination accelerates on the Continent.[15] By the 9th and 10th centuries, Isidore is a standard author in library catalogues, booklists, and reading guides,[16] and his influence is attested by glosses, glossaries, florilegia, and encyclopaedias.[17]

10 Warntjes, *The Munich computus*, cxxvi–cxxviii.

11 Di Sciacca, *Finding the right words*, 40, 45–47.

12 For Old English glosses on Isidore, we have the evidence of an Isidorian epitome, extant in a 9th-century continental manuscript, which is regarded as a copy of an insular exemplar written in the 8th century. See Lapidge, "Isidorian epitome," 183–223. For the relationship between the epitome and Anglo-Saxon glossaries, see also Lazzari, "Isidore's *Etymologiae*," 68. Moreover, the vernacularisation of Isidore is not confined to the *Etymologiae*. For instance, Claudia Di Sciacca, *Finding the right words*, 149 has highlighted the "uses and adaptations that were made of the Isidorian text (ie *Synonyma*) in Old English."

13 Di Sciacca, *Finding the right words*, 47–52 and Barney *et al*., *The Etymologies*, 25. Rolf H. Bremmer Jr, "The Anglo-Saxon continental mission and the transfer of encyclopaedic knowledge," in *Foundations of learning*, 19–50 outlines the importance of the encyclopaedic tradition as reflected in the books of Anglo-Saxon missionaries.

14 Some of the works of Isidore were in Frankish centres by *ca*. 780, Bischoff, "Verbreitung," 178. And a number of Isidorian works were used by Defensor of Ligugé writing *ca*. 700 in his *Liber scintillarum*, a biblical and Patristic florilegium, Bischoff, "Verbreitung," 177.

15 Hillgarth, "The position of Isidorian studies," 887. See also the recent contribution of Veronika von Büren on Theodulf of Orléans and the reception of the *Etymologiae* in the Carolingian world. Veronika von Büren, "La place du manuscrit Amb. L. 99 sup. dans la transmission des *Étymologies* d'Isidore de Séville," in *Nuove ricerche su codici in scrittura latina dell'Ambrosiana: Atti del Convegno. Milano, 6–7 ottobre 2005*, eds. M. Ferrari and M. Navoni (Milan: 2007), 25–44.

16 Carolingian library catalogues show that Isidore took his place beside Patristic authorities and Bede, Bischoff, "Verbreitung," 188. See also Notker of Saint Gall's reading guide, which recommends Isidore. Erwin Rauner, ed., "Notkers des Stammlers *Notatio de illustribus uiris*, Teil 1: Kritische Edition," *Mittellateinisches Jahrbuch* 21 (1986), 34–69.

17 For example, Isidore is an important source for the *Liber glossarum* and Hrabanus Maurus's encyclopaedic work, *De universo*. Another interesting example is provided by Melissa Markauskas, Rylands, "MS Latin 12: A Carolingian example of Isidore's reception into the Patristic canon?," in *Isidore of Seville and his reception in the Early Middle Ages*, 177–207 who studies the heavy use of Isidorian excerpts in a Carolingian homiliary.

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2 Encyclopaedism: The Weight of Authorities

Isidore's most enduring contribution, the *Etymologiae*, "destined to become *the* work of reference for the entire Middle Ages,"[18] was often the first port of call for early medieval writers and compilers. The *Etymologiae* was a veritable storehouse of learning and heir to the traditions of etymologising and encyclopaedism.[19] The encyclopaedic tradition had an ancient pedigree, which, though never uniform in its particulars, transmitted an ideal of comprehensiveness.[20] However one ordered knowledge, encyclopaedic compendia posited some kind of "definitive status,"[21] as is indeed illustrated by the testimony of Isidore's contemporary editor, Braulio of Saragossa, who regarded Isidore's works as comprehensive.[22] Methodologically, encyclopaedism was founded on the antiquarian practices of organising, excerpting, collecting, summarising, synthesising, and citing the works of authorities.[23] Such activities had a venerable ancestry and found significant expression in the medieval world.[24] Their

18 Michael W. Herren, "Storehouses of learning: encyclopaedias and other reference works in Ireland and pre-Bedan Anglo-Saxon England," in *Practice in learning: the transfer of encyclopaedic knowledge in the early Middle Ages*, eds. Rolf H. Bremmer Jr and Kees Dekker (Paris: 2010), 5.

19 Barney *et al.*, *The Etymologies*, 14.

20 Many different principles of organising information developed. For which, see Christel Meier, "Organisation of knowledge and encyclopaedic *ordo*: functions and purposes of a universal literary genre," in *Pre-modern encyclopaedic texts: Proceedings of the second COMERS Congress, Groningen, 1–4 July 1996*, ed. Peter Binkley (Leiden: 1997), 103–26. Scholars now generally urge caution in positing "a uniform cross-cultural notion of an encyclopaedic genre," Jason König and Greg Woolf, "Introduction," in *Encyclopaedism from Antiquity to the Renaissance*, eds. Jason König and Greg Woolf (Cambridge: 2013), 2.

21 König and Woolf, "Introduction," 1.

22 Drawing on Cicero, Braulio of Zaragoza, Isidore's correspondent, states: "Your books have brought us back, as if to our home, when we were roving and wandering in our own city like strangers, so that we might sometimes be able to understand who and where we are. You have laid open the lifetime of our country, the description of the ages, the laws of sacred matters and of priests, learning both domestic and public, the names, kinds, functions and causes of settlements, regions, places, and all matters both human and divine," Barney *et al.*, *The Etymologies*, 8–9. Comprehensiveness went hand-in-hand with the idea of transmitting knowledge from a "universe of learning." For *compendia* of knowledge, see Bernard Ribémont, "On the definitions of an encyclopaedic genre in the Middle Ages," in *Pre-modern encyclopaedic texts*, 47–61, esp. 50. Linked to the idea of comprehensiveness is the Greek ideal of *polymatheia*, Martin Irvine, *The making of textual culture: "Grammatica" and literary theory, 350–1100* (Cambridge: 1994), 43.

23 For Isidore's research methods, see Fontaine, *Isidore*, vol. 2, 762–78.

24 Robert L. Fowler, "Encyclopaedias: definitions and theoretical problems," *Pre-modern encyclopaedic texts*, 18 notes the importance of the tradition within medieval monastic culture. The methods associated with the encyclopaedic tradition (excerpting, gathering,

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roots are attested in Graeco-Roman culture, important milestones within which were Hellenistic Alexandria and the Roman imperial period.[25] The encyclopaedic tradition continued apace into the late antique and early medieval worlds, with noteworthy examples furnished by the works of Boethius and Martianus Capella,[26] and by the intellectual culture associated with the 10th-century Macedonian Emperor Constantine VII.[27] With regards to use, we find encyclopaedic works such as the *Etymologiae* heavily excerpted by medieval glossators and compilers, as is illustrated by early Anglo-Saxon glossarial activity.[28] And it is clear that the transfer of encyclopaedic information was no simple matter. Some indication of the complexity of the process is demonstrated by the *Scholica graecarum glossarum*, a collection of glosses compiled well before the end of the 9th century, which may perhaps have originally been a collection of excerpts from the *Etymologiae*.[29] Patrizia Lendinara has shown that the Isidorian entries in this compilation of glosses were supplemented

synthesising) underpinned medieval *memoria*. For the link between composition, collation, recollection and memory, see Mary Carruthers, *The book of memory: a study of memory in medieval culture* (Cambridge: 1990), 199. For a study of memory and the organisation of knowledge, see Kimberly Ann Rivers, "Memory, division, and the organisation of knowledge in the Middle Ages," in *Pre-modern encyclopaedic texts*, 147–58.

25 For Alexandrian encyclopaedism, esp. the tradition as developed under the Ptolemiac dynasty, see Myrto Hatzimichali, "Encyclopaedism in the Alexandrian library," in *Encyclopaedism from Antiquity to the Renaissance*, 64–83. For classical encyclopaedism, see Jason König and Greg Woolf, "Encyclopaedism in the Roman empire," in *Encyclopaedism from Antiquity to the Renaissance*, 23–63.

26 Mariken Teeuwen, "Martianus Capella's *De nuptiis*: A pagan 'storehouse' first discovered by the Irish?" in *Foundations of learning*, 61 has noted that early medieval glosses on Martianus display an overwhelming preoccupation with the accumulation of secular learning; such glosses furnish a kind of "second encyclopaedia of learning" and seem to fulfill a "collecting purpose"; Mariken Teeuwen, "Glossing in close co-operation: examples from ninth-century Martianus Capella manuscripts," in *Practice in learning*, 94.

27 Paul Magdalino, "Byzantine encyclopaedism of the ninth and tenth centuries," in *Encyclopaedism from Antiquity to the Renaissance*, 219–31.

28 A crucial witness to these activities is an Isidorian epitome (see above footnote 12). This epitome is linked with a number of glossaries. Two Old English glosses in the epitome, for which no source has been found, are also in the Épinal-Erfurt glossary. And one of the Old English glosses in the epitome is related to a gloss in the Werden glossary. It would seem that a glossed manuscript of Isidore was drawn upon by a variety of different compilers. See Lazzari, "Isidore's *Etymologiae*," 67–68. Isidore is also a source for the Leiden Glossary, Rolf H. Bremmer Jr, "Leiden, Universiteitsbibliotheek, Vossianus Latinus Q. 69 (Part 2): Schoolbook or proto-encyclopaedic miscellany," in *Practice in learning*, 27.

29 Patrizia Lendinara, "The *Scholica Graecarum Glossarum* and Martianus Capella," in *Carolingian scholarship and Martianus Capella: Ninth-century commentary traditions on Martianus' "De nuptiis" in context*, eds. Mariken Teeuwen and Sinéad O'Sullivan (Turnhout: 2011), 304, 326, provides further evidence in support of this hypothesis. She discovered the

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and conflated over time with new material from many sources.[30] A similar process is witnessed by Irish computistical textbooks, which, it would seem, drew on lists of excerpts from well-known authors, such as Isidore, Augustine, and Jerome. These excerpts in turn had often been "added to, revised, and updated."[31]

3 Etymology: The Weight of Words

The study of words and their origins was the cornerstone of the *Etymologiae*.[32] For Isidore, words had epistemic value: *Nisi enim nomen scieris, cognitio rerum perit* ("Indeed, unless you know its name, the knowledge of a thing perishes").[33] According to him, investigation of the origin of words provided access to understanding: *Omnis enim rei inspectio etymologia cognita planior est* ("One's insight into anything is clearer when its etymology is known").[34] Etymology,

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presence in MS Ripoll 74 of a version of the *Scholica* together with unalphabetized batches of excerpts from the *Etymologiae*.

30 For example, the compilers of the *Scholica* added to their compilation excerpts from Martianus Capella's *De nuptiis* and glosses on Martianus's work, Lendinara, "*Scholica Graecarum Glossarum* and Martianus Capella," 310.

31 Warntjes, *Munich computus*, cxxvi.

32 Commenting on the *Etymologiae*, A.H. Merrills, "Isidore's *Etymologiae*: On words and things," in *Encyclopaedism from Antiquity to the Renaissance*, 303 describes it as a "written manifestation of the world of words read and remembered." John Henderson, *The Medieval World of Isidore of Seville: Truth from Words* (Cambridge: 2007), 210 speaks of the "cosmogonic instrumentality of wordpower." See also the discussions by Jacques Elfassi on etymology and José Carracedo on grammar in this volume.

33 Isidore, *Etymologiae* 1.7.1. All translations are taken from Barney *et al.*, *The Etymologies*. See also Irvine, *The making of textual culture*, 222. The function of names ties in with the theories of language as natural or conventional.

34 Isidore, *Etymologiae* 1.29.2. For etymology and language as furnishing access to knowledge and the world, see Fontaine, *Isidore*, vol. 1, 41: "L'étymologie y est devenue la démarche essentielle de toute connaissance"; Merrills, "Isidore's *Etymologies*," 303 and 307, maintains that, for Isidore, "language offered a simulacrum of the world," and that Isidore saw etymology as a "strategy to uncover the deeper significance (*uis*) of words and hence as a means to understand better the world they represent"; Mark Amsler, *Etymology and grammatical discourse in late antiquity and the early Middle Ages* (Amsterdam: 1989), 12 argues that, for Isidore, "the etymologies of the names for things constitute epistemic access to the things themselves." Some qualification is furnished by Davide del Bello who takes issue with what he regards as Amsler's interpretation of language as the "all-embracing measure of reality," in which *res* (objects) are conflated with *uoces* (verbal signs). Del Bello, *Forgotten paths: Etymology and the allegorical mindset* (Washington, D.C.: 2007), 97–101 argues that language was "*allegorical*, the visible form of invisible meanings."

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then, was much more than a "diachronic analysis of a lexeme" or a methodology.[35] For Isidore, it unlocked immanent meaning, the *uis uerbi uel nominis* ("force of a verb or a noun").[36] As he says: *Nam dum videris unde ortum est nomen, citius vim eius intellegis* ("For when you have seen whence a word has originated, you understand its force more quickly").[37]

Isidore's foregrounding of words and their origins, though crucial for medieval intellectual culture, was not new. Like the encyclopaedic tradition, etymology had a long lineage stretching back to antiquity.[38] It found a home in Graeco-Roman and Judaeo-Christian cultures, for instance amongst Stoic philosophers, Alexandrian grammarians, as well as Jewish and Christian exegetes.[39] Its importance has been documented by modern scholars who challenge the assumption that "etymologies of the Isidorian kind" are outdated "curious specimens" that can be dismissed on the grounds of "semantic and phonological inaccuracy."[40]

The history of etymology is linked with long-standing debates on language and its relationship to reality, debates which underpin Isidore's understanding of words. To begin with, a search for the incorporeal informs much of ancient, Patristic, and medieval language theories. Letters, words, and language itself, together with grammatical, dialectical, and etymological enquiry, were often associated with the recovery of truth and original purity. For the Stoics, language was regarded as a vehicle to "glimpse the essential nature of reality."[41] For Augustine, language, with its ambiguities and its potential to "generate multiple homonymous or polysemous meanings," was a resource for "the discovery and exploration of religious understanding."[42] More generally, the esoteric and Hermetic strains in Jewish and Christian exegesis made language a tool for mystical signification.

35 Di Sciacca, *Finding the right words*, 14: "The etymological study of a given word is for Isidore not just a diachronic analysis of a lexeme, but also a metaphysical investigation of a signified object."

36 Isidore, *Etymologiae* 1.29.1.

37 Barney *et al.*, *The Etymologies*, 55.

38 For etymology, see, esp., Ernst Robert Curtius, "Etymology as a category of thought," in *European literature and the Latin Middle Age*, trans. Willard R. Trask (London: 1953), 495–500.

39 Di Sciacca, *Finding the right words*, 14 describes Isidore's notion of etymology as a "syncretistic combination of Alexandrine grammatical scholarship, philosophical learning, Jewish lore and Christian exegesis."

40 Del Bello, *Forgotten paths*, xiv.

41 Amsler, *Etymology*, 166.

42 John Chamberlin, *Medieval arts doctrines on ambiguity and their place in Langland's poetics* (Montreal: 2000), 37–39.

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Isidore's epistemology forms part of an ancient and complex debate on the correspondence between words and the world which pivoted on the theories of language as natural (i.e. words represent reality) or conventional (words are based on convention).[43] For Isidore, as we have seen, words furnish access to knowledge of things. This correspondence illustrates what Jean Jolivet characterises as the "grammatical platonism" of medieval thought according to which words and things are homologous.[44] In this tradition, words and things are intertwined "by virtue of the forms that subsist in the divine mind according to which the world was created."[45] They correspond with the "reality of ideas that both lend essentiality to the identities of things and also articulate the formalities of words."[46] For Isidore, moreover, not only is there a correspondence between words and the world, but the latter is construed as an ordered universe, a divine creation. This, in turn, further underscores the significance of etymology and the focus on the literal in his *Etymologiae*.

For Davide del Bello, however, the full importance of etymology can only be understood when seen in relation to allegory. Both etymology and allegory were "complementary modes of thought," the former providing the foundations on which the latter was built.[47] Etymology and grammatical studies ought then to be understood as "part of a broader epistemology where the study of *voces*, of verbal signs, goes hand in hand with the study of *res*, of objects and phenomena, that are framed in language but exist beyond it."[48] In short, etymology was regarded as an epistemological practice at the heart of early medieval hermeneutics. It opened up "interpretative routes that allegory follows and ratifies at higher discursive levels."[49] This function of etymology provides insight into the wider significance of, and preoccupation with, words in the early medieval period as attested by glosses, glossaries, word lists, *glossae*

43 For discussion of these theories, see Amsler, *Etymology*, 24–56. See also Laura Carlson, "Adoption, adaption and authority: The use of Isidore in the *Opus Caroli*," in *Isidore of Seville and his reception*, 209–30 for discussion of the origins of words and the relationship between language and reality.

44 "L'univers des noms et celui des choses sont homologues et que pour comprendre le second il faut d'abord connaître le contenu du premier; l'étymologie nous enseigne la nature des choses," Jean Jolivet, "Quelques cas de «platonisme grammatical» du VIIe au XIIe siècle," in *Mélanges offerts à René Crozet*, eds. Pierre Gallais and Yves-Jean Riou (Poitiers: 1966), 94. For further discussion, see Chamberlin, *Medieval arts doctrines*, 112–13.

45 Chamberlin, *Medieval arts doctrines*, 112.

46 Chamberlin, *Medieval arts doctrines*, 77.

47 Del Bello, *Forgotten paths*, xiv, 13.

48 Del Bello, *Forgotten paths*, 99.

49 Del Bello, *Forgotten paths*, 108.

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collectae, lexicons, and the reception of writers such as Servius, whose linguistic and antiquarian focus proved invaluable to Isidore.[50]

One key aspect informing Isidore's etymological method was the notion that immanent meaning lay beneath letters and language itself, an idea at the core of sacred onomastics, mystical orthography, and biblical truth.[51] This idea is attested in Isidore's interpretation of *litterae mysticae* and more generally in his semiotic understanding of letters as signs communicating information and binding things in memory: "Indeed, letters are tokens of things, the signs of words, and they have so much force that the utterances of those who are absent speak to us without a voice…The use of letters was invented for the sake of remembering things, which are bound by letters lest they slip away into oblivion".[52]

A measure of the fundamental significance of letters and language becomes clear when one considers Isidore's understanding of the original language, which appears in his discussion of the sacred languages, the *tres linguae sacrae*, and in his exposition on the diversity of languages. For Isidore, a direct link existed between Hebrew, Greek, and Latin. In this relationship, Latin "contained within its verbal structure the spirit … of Hebrew truth" and thus provided access to the pre-Babel, original language (i.e. Hebrew) and to Edenic purity.[53] Isidore's interest in letters, words, and etymology was thus founded on the principle of Edenic harmony. As Mark Amsler argues, it was "authorized by the Incarnation of the Perfect Word, revealing in its fullness the divine truth immanent in the original Edenic language." In short, for Isidore, the deployment of etymology was motivated not by linguistic goals but by a search for essential or original meaning (see also Thomas O'Loughlin's discussion of Isidore's theology and his linking of the structures of creation and knowing elsewhere in this volume).

50 For the reception of Servius in the ninth and tenth centuries, see Sinéad O'Sullivan, "Servius in the Carolingian Age: A case study of Harley 2782," *Journal of Medieval Latin* 26 (2016), 77–123.

51 Amsler, *Etymology*, 151. The idea is reflected in Augustine's phrase *secreta verborum* ("hidden things of words"), Augustine, *De Genesi contra Manichaeos* 2.2.3.

52 "Litterae autem sunt indices rerum, signa verborum, quibus tanta vis est, ut nobis dicta absentium sine voce loquantur…Vsus litterarum repertus propter memoriam rerum. Nam ne obliuione fugiant, litteris alligantur idore," *Etymologiae* 1.3.1–2. Isidore was not the first to consider the memorial function of language. See, e.g., the discussion of Augustine's theory of interior illumination in Amsler, *Etymology*, 103. Malcolm B. Parkes, *Pause and effect: an introduction to the history of punctuation in the West* (Aldershot: 1992), 21, however, notes the differences between Isidore's focus on letters as signs *without* sounds and Augustine's notion that letters were signs of sounds.

53 Amsler, *Etymology*, 149–51. See also Merrills, "Isidore's *Etymologies*," 307–10.

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4 Encyclopaedism and Etymology in the Carolingian and Ottonian Worlds

Encyclopaedism and etymology, Isidore's "twin informing principles,"[54] thrived in Carolingian and Ottonian intellectual circles and help us better to appreciate the context in which the Spaniard was used between the 9th and 11th centuries. These traditions are illustrated by the evident enthusiasm for encyclopaedic texts like Martianus Capella's *De nuptiis Philologiae et Mercurii* and Servius's commentaries on Virgil, by Hrabanus Maurus's reworking of the *Etymologiae*, and above all, by the reception of Isidore, who was not simply copied but excerpted, illustrated, translated, glossed, and reworked.[55] In Carolingian

54 Barney *et al.*, *The Etymologies*, 13.

55 Evina Steinova is currently working on Isidore's *Etymologiae* in the Carolingian period. For an overview of the Carolingian reception of Martianus Capella, see Sinéad O'Sullivan, "Introduction," in *Glossae aeui Carolini in libros I–II Martiani Capellae "De nuptiis Philologiae et Mercurii,"* ed. Sinéad O'Sullivan, CCCM 237 (Turnhout: 2010), v-xxxiv. For Servius, see O'Sullivan, "Servius in the Carolingian Age," 77–123. For Hrabanus Maurus's *De universo*, see Elizabeth Keen, "Shifting horizons: the medieval compilation of knowledge as a mirror of a changing world," in *Encyclopaedism from Antiquity to the Renaissance*, 277–300. In the preface to his work, Hrabanus linked the study of words and mystical signification, Amsler, *Etymology*, 195. An impressive example of an Isidorian manuscript is British Library, Harley MS. 2686 (9th century, western France). It contains occasional zoomorphic and foliate decoration, diagrams, and uses yellow, green, red and brown inks. Isidore is a staple of medieval library catalogues in the 9th, 10th and 11th centuries. See, for instance, the appearance of Isidore in places where Prudentius is glossed in Sinéad O'Sullivan, *Early medieval glosses on Prudentius' "Psychomachia": The Weitz tradition* (Leiden: 2004), 110–11. That Isidore was glossed is illustrated by the copy of the *Etymologiae* in a Laon manuscript (Laon, Bibliothèque municipale, MS 447) annotated by the Irish scholar Probus of Mainz and also by the appearance of Old High German glosses on *De ecclesiasticis officiis* found in 9th-century manuscripts. For the annotations of the Irish master, see John J. Contreni, "The Irish 'colony' at Laon during the time of John Scottus," in *Jean Scot Érigène et l'histoire de la philosophie*, ed. René Roques (Paris: 1977), 62. For the Old High German glosses, see Andreas Nievergelt, "Pfiff und gesang: Althochdeutsche Griffelglossen zu Isidor von Sevilla *De ecclesiasticis officiis*," *Zeitschrift für deutsche Philologie* 129 (2010), 1–48. A famous translation of Isidore's *De fide catholica ex ueteri et nouo testamento contra Iudeos* into Old High German, the so-called *Isidor*, further attests to the reception of Isidore in the 9th century. See Kurt Ostberg, *The Old High German "Isidor" in its relationship to the extant manuscripts* (*eighth to twelfth century*) *of Isidorus "De fide catholica"* (Stuttgart: 1979); Elke Krotz, *Auf den Spuren des althochdeutschen Isidor: Studien zur Pariser Handschrift, den Monseer Fragmenten und zum Codex Junius 25. Mit einer Neuedition des Glossars Jc* (Heidelberg: 1998); Jonathan West, "The language of the earliest German literature," in *German literature of the early Middle Ages*, ed. Brian Murdoch (Rochester: 2004), 46–47. Isidore's continuing importance is demonstrated by the eleventh-century work, the *Summarium Heinrici*, which draws heavily on the *Etymologiae*. See Hillgarth, "Position," 890.

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theological debates, the "signifying power of language" was foregrounded by the 9th-century writer Fredegisus in his interpretation of *nihil* as a *vox significativa* in his *De nihilo et tenebris* ("On nothing and Darkness"). For Fredegisus, words had signification, and grammar provided a means of unlocking reality.[56]

Isidore was also a source of information on many subjects in the early medieval world, including the liberal arts.[57] Figures such as Theodulf of Orléans, Walahfrid Strabo, and Otfrid von Weissenburg were indebted to him.[58] And a wealth of Isidorian material occurs in florilegia, glossaries, and in the margins of manuscripts. One such compilation is Laon, Bibliothèque municipale, MS 468, copied in the third quarter of the 9th century, edited by Martin Hiberniensis and heavily dependent on Isidore.[59] Further examples are furnished by important medieval glossaries, such as the *Scholica graecarum glossarum* and *Liber glossarum*, both of which derive large quantities of material from Isidore.[60] Glosses too highlight the authority of the Spaniard. For example, considerable Isidorian material is present in Carolingian and Ottonian glosses. Whilst this in itself is hardly a surprise, it nevertheless provides insight into the status of

56 See Amsler, *Etymology*, 228–29 and also Symke Haverkamp, *Making Something from nothing: content and context of Fredegisus of Tours' "De substantia nihili et tenebrarum*," (PhD dissertation, Utrecht: 2006).

57 See Bruce S. Eastwood, *Ordering the heavens: Roman astronomy and cosmology in the Carolingian Renaissance* (Leiden: 2007), 3.

58 Hrabanus Maurus's *De uniuerso* draws very heavily on the *Etymologiae*. The work, however, is also infused with allegorical interpretations, Amsler, *Etymology*, 195. Theodulf's *Libellus de processione spiritus sancti* comprises a patchwork of excerpts from authorities such as Isidore: O'Sullivan, *Early medieval glosses on Prudentius' "Psychomachia*," 18. For Walahfrid's and Otfrid's indebtedness to Isidore, see Alice L. Harting-Correa, *Walahfrid Strabo's "Libellus de exordiis et incrementis quarundam in observationibus ecclesiasticis rerum": A translation and liturgical commentary* (Leiden: 1996), 32; Herbert Kolb, "Isidor's *Etymologien* in deutscher Literatur des Mittelalters," *Archiv für das Studium der neueren Sprachen und Literaturen* 205 (1969), 441–53. See also Laura Carlson's exposition of Theodulf's epistemological understanding of language in his *Opus Caroli* in "Adoption, adaption and authority," 209–30.

59 On fols. 5v-8v nearly half the glosses are from the *Etymologiae* and on fols. 9r-18v, we find many excerpts from Isidore. See John J. Contreni, *Codex Laudunensis 468: A ninth-century guide to Virgil, Sedulius and the Liberal Arts* (Turnhout: 1984), 17–18.

60 We have already seen how the compilers of the *Scholica graecarum glossarum* drew heavily on Isidore. As for the *Liber glossarum*, one of the most extensive medieval glossaries, it has been described as a "patchwork of Isidore, labelled ISID; Vergil glosses, labelled VIRGL; and two other alphabetical glossaries, namely *Abstrusa* and *Abolita*." See Herren, "Storehouses," 3. See also Patrizia Lendinara, "A storehouse of learned vocabulary: the Abbo Glossary in Anglo-Saxon England," in *Practice in learning*, 104–05; David Ganz, "The *Liber Glossarum*: A Carolingian encyclopedia," in *Science in Western and Eastern civilization in Carolingian times*, eds. Paul Leo Butzer and Dietrich Lohrmann (Basel: 1993), 127–35.

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Isidore and the influence of his "twin informing principles," namely etymology and encyclopaedism.[61]

5 Glosses in the Carolingian and Ottonian Worlds

Glosses are an invaluable source of information about the enduring reputation of Isidore and the importance of his intellectual inheritance. In what follows, I shall look at annotations across a variety of different texts in order to offer comparative analysis. To this end, I shall focus on glosses circulating between the 9th and early 11th centuries in West and East Frankish centres of learning. This study selects a cross-section of works (e.g. prose and poetic, pagan and Christian), and focuses on some of the most heavily glossed authors in the early Middle Ages, namely Virgil, Martianus Capella, and Prudentius. It will demonstrate that Isidore was a much-exploited authority whose works were heavily excerpted, interwoven with other sources and added to existing commentaries. In addition, we shall see that glosses underscore the influence of Isidore's intellectual inheritance in the early medieval period.

To begin with, Isidore was clearly regarded as an authority by compilers, as is illustrated by the prefatory material, glosses, and diagrams found in glossed Virgil manuscripts. Very often his works are excerpted or echoed, and he is sometimes named as the source of information, for example in Bern, Burgerbibliothek MS 172 (saec. IX, Paris region or Fleury),[62] where his name is underlined, along with the names of Gaudentius, Gallus, and Iunilius Flagrius,[63] and

61 See also Martin Ryan's chapter elsewhere in this volume for more on the presence of Isidore in glossaries.

62 Bernhard Bischoff, *Katalog der festländischen Handschriften des neunten Jahrhunderts (mit Ausnahme der wisigotischen), Teil 1: Aachen-Lambach* (Wiesbaden: 1998), Nr. 545, 115; John J. Savage, "The manuscripts of the commentary of Servius Danielis on Virgil," *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology* 43 (1932), 96–103; Marco Mostert, *The library of Fleury. A provisional list of manuscripts* (Hildesheim: 1989), BF093, 60. For an overview of the possible origins of Bern MS 172, see Silvia Ottaviano, *La tradizione delle opere di Virgilio tra IX e XI sec.* (PhD dissertation, Pisa: 2014), 141–43.

63 For example, we find the names of Gaudentius and Iunilius in a gloss on *Hibleis* on fol. 5r on Virgil's *Eclogue* 1.54. For the gloss on *Hibleis*, see Hermann Hagen, ed., *Scholia Bernensia ad Vergili Bucolica atque Georgica* (Leipzig: 1867; repr. Hildesheim: 1967), 753. We find the name of Isidore in a gloss on *cantantes cycni* on fol. 2or on Virgil's *Eclogue* 9.29. For the gloss on *cantantes cycni*, see Hagen, *Scholia Bernensia*, 829. The glosses on the *Eclogues* in Bern 172 are from the so-called Bern scholia. Many of the glosses in the Bern scholia are often attributed to Iunilius, Gaudentius and Gallus. The name Iunilius Flagrius is commonly seen as identical to Iunius Filargirius (i.e. Philargyrius). See David Daintree, "Virgil and Virgil scholia in early medieval Ireland," *Romanobarbarica* 16 (1999), 351–52.

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in Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Reg. lat. 1669 (mid or third quarter of the 9th century, Rheims), where contemporary scribes furnish Virgil with heavy marginal and interlinear additions drawn from many sources, but especially from Servius.[64] In her detailed study of the Vatican manuscript, Silvia Ottaviano demonstrates that the prefatory material in the manuscript, very likely copied at the same time as the text, transmits astronomical extracts from Bede's *De natura rerum*, Macrobius's *Commentarii in somnium Scipionis*, and Isidore's *De Differentiis* as well as excerpts from the *Etymologiae* and Augustine's *De doctrina christiana*. One of the hands on fols 1r-2v and on fol. 3v also edits the commentary of Servius and furnishes supplementary additions from Augustine's *De civitate Dei* on fol. 16r and from the *Etymologiae* on fol. 20v.[65] The excerpt from the *Etymologiae* is from book 3.44.1–4 and describes the five zones, the *quinque circuli mundi*, portrayed as climatic regions of habitable and uninhabitable lands. The name of Isidore, written in rustic capitals, appears above the excerpt and glosses the line in Virgil's *Georgics* 1.233: *quinque tenent caelum zonae*. The Isidorian gloss goes hand in hand with a schematic representation of the world on fol. 21r where the zones are depicted as parallel bands within a circle. Ottaviano has discovered an identical map in another 9th-century manuscript which perhaps emanates from Saint Germain d'Auxerre: Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, lat. 7926.[66] And in yet another glossed Virgil manuscript, Montpellier, Bibliothèque interuniversitaire, Section Médecine, H 253 (saec. IX $^{2}/_{3}$, Northeast France?), there is on fol. 21r a representation of the zones as arcs accompanied by an excerpt from *Etymologiae* 3.44.2–4.[67]

Cumulatively, these findings accord with what is known about the use of Isidore in the context of early medieval commentary on the five zones. Loredana Teresi, in her examination of the spatial depictions of the world, has noted that different visual diagrams of the zones existed and that the concept of

64 For example, we find the name of Isidore in the margins on fol. 19v. For the manuscript, see Bernhard Bischoff, *Katalog der festländischen Handschriften des neunten Jahrhunderts* (*mit Ausnahme der wisigotischen*)*, Teil III: Padua-Zwickau* (*aus dem Nachlaß herausgegeben von Birgit Ebersperger*) (Wiesbaden: 2014), Nr. 6795, 441 and also Silvia Ottaviano, "Il *Reg. lat*. 1669: un'edizione di Virgilio d'età carolingia," *Miscellanea Bibliothecae Apostolicae Vaticanae* 16 (Rome: 2009), 259–324.

65 Ottaviano, "Il *Reg. lat*. 1669," 259–324.

66 Ottaviano, "Il *Reg. lat*. 1669," 266.

67 For a description of the manuscript, see Bernhard Bischoff, *Katalog der festländischen Handschriften des neunten Jahrhunderts* (*mit Ausnahme der wisigotischen*)*, Teil II: Laon-Paderborn* (*aus dem Nachlaß herausgegeben von Birgit Ebersperger*) (Wiesbaden: 2004), Nr. 2852, 205.

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the five zones was popularised in the Middle Ages through the writings of Macrobius, Isidore, and Bede.[68] More generally, the Isidorian excerpts and the diagrams in the glossed Virgil manuscripts listed above attest to the authority of Isidore. Further confirmation is furnished by other glossed manuscripts in which Isidore is cited, as in Valenciennes, Bibliothèque municipale, MS lat. 407 (saec. IX^2, Northeast France). In the Valenciennes manuscript Isidore, along with Nonius, Solinus, Virgil, and Servius, is mentioned by name, as in the following gloss on *Aeneid* 7.637.[69] The gloss is intertextual. It contains an excerpt from the *Etymologiae* which leads the reader from the Virgilian text to Isidore. By means of the annotation, the reader, in turn, is referred back to the passage in Virgil that is being glossed:

> *Aeneid* 7.637
> CLASSICA IAMQVE SONANT: Esidorus classica sunt cornua quae uocandi causa erant facta et a calando classica dicebantur. De quibus Virgilius "classica iamque sonant" (fol. 150v; see *Etymologiae* 18.4.4).

Furnishing the name of Isidore in an annotation was not uncommon. It is evident in many of the notes in the so-called Bern scholia, a collection of glosses on the *Eclogues* and *Georgics* which derives its name from a number of manuscripts now housed in Bern.[70] The annotation below illustrates this. It appears in a Virgil manuscript transmitting Bern scholia on the *Eclogues* and *Georgics* and expanded Servius on the *Aeneid*, that is, in Bern, Burgerbibliothek, MS 167 (third quarter of the 9th century, Brittany, Fleury, or Auxerre?):[71]

68 Loredana Teresi, "Anglo-Saxon and early Anglo-Norman *Mappaemundi*," in *Foundations of learning*, 341–77; Loredana Teresi, "Migrating maps: the case of the 'three-dimensional' diagram for the *quinque circuli mundi*," in *Practice in learning*, 257–83.

69 For a description of the Valenciennes manuscript, see Robert A. Kaster, *The tradition of the text of the Aeneid in the ninth century* (New York: 1990), 27. Concerning its provenance, we know that it was at St. Amand. Bischoff locates it in Northeast France. See Bischoff, *Katalog* III, Nr. 6394, 400.

70 Bern, Burgerbibliothek, MS 172 and MS 167. There is evidence that the original collection may also have had scholia on the *Aeneid* as suggested by Paul Lehmann's study of an Orosius commentary, "Reste und Spuren antiker Gelehrsamkeit in mittelalterlichen Texte," in *Erforschung des Mittelalters: Ausgewählte Abhandlungen und Aufsätze*, ed. Paul Lehmann (Stuttgart: 1959), vol. 2, 29–37. Isidore is mentioned by name in the Bern Scholia on *Bucolics* 3.111; 9.29; *Georgics* 1.50; 1.88. See Hagen, *Scholia Bernensia*, 775, 830, 849, 853.

71 Bischoff, *Katalog* I, Nr. 542, 114; Savage, "The manuscripts of the commentary of Servius Danielis on Virgil," 103–05; Mostert, *The library of Fleury*, BF093, 60. For an overview of the possible origin of the manuscript, see Ottaviano, *La tradizione delle opere di Virgilio*, 184–85.

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> *Eclogue* 3.8
> TVENTIBVS HIRCIS: 'Tuentibus hircis.' Isidorus: hircus: lasciuum est animal et petulcum feruens semper ad coiticum (*lege* coitum), cuius oculi ob libidinem in transuersum aspiciunt, unde et nomen traxit. Nam hirci sunt oculorum anguli secundum Suetonium, cuius natura adeo calidissima, ut adamantem lapidem, quem neque ignis, nec ferrum domari ualet, solus cruor desoluat (fol. 9r).[72]

Much of the above passage, which repeats verbatim Isidore's *Etymologiae* 12.1.14, occurs in another Virgilian commentary closely related to the Bern scholia, namely in the *Explanatio in Bucolica Vergilii* ascribed to Iunius Philargyrius.[73] Isidore is also cited by name in other 9th-century glosses, for instance in glosses on Martianus Capella. In the heavily glossed Martianus manuscript, Leiden, Universiteitsbibliotheek, Vossianus Latinus Folio 48 (second quarter of the 9th century, Auxerre),[74] the following annotation draws on *Etymologiae* 13.3.1–3, and a similar arrangement of information appears in the *Scholica graecarum glossarum*.[75]

> *De nuptiis* 1.1
> ELEMENTA: Ambrosius dicit a limo limas addita praepositione 'e' quasi ualde formo, inde elementa. Aliquando enim semina retinet in natura rerum, aliquando soluit ut crescant. Ilen Grece dicitur materies sicut

72 For this annotation, I have checked the manuscript and made a number of alterations to Gino Funaioli's transcription. Gino Funaioli, *Esegesi Virgiliana Antica: Prolegomeni alla edizione del commento di Giunio Filargirio e di Tito Gallo* (Milan: 1930), 152–53. See also Thilo and Hagen, *Servii grammatici*, 3.2: 50, 18–51, 3.

73 Georg Thilo and Hermann Hagen, eds., *Servii grammatici qui feruntur in Vergilii carmina commentarii*, vol. 3.2 (Leipzig, 1902), 50–51.

74 A dedication formula of the archdeacon Heliseus of Auxerre on fol. 50v giving the manuscript to the monastery of Saint-Germain links it with Auxerre. Mariken Teeuwen, "The pursuit of secular learning: The oldest commentary tradition on Martianus Capella," *The Journal of Medieval Latin* 18 (2008), 39, however, also explores the possibility of a link with Tours.

75 E 27: *Elimentum per l scribitur ut quibusdam videtur veniens a verbo quod est elimo id est formo ipsumque a nomine trahitur, quod est lima instrumentum fabri; sed melius ab yle venit quod est graecum et interpretatur materies, et mutatis litteris scribitur elementum, quod graece dicitur stochium*. Patrizia Lendinara, "The *Scholica Graecarum glossarum* and Martianus Capella," in *Carolingian scholarship and Martianus Capella*, 344. For an earlier edition of the *Scholica*, see Max L.W. Laistner, "Notes on Greek from the lectures of a ninth-century monastery teacher," *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library* 7 (1923), 436.

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> Isidorus dicit, quia stochia Grece, Latine elementa, unde inuisibilia cuncta procedunt (fol. 2r).[76]

The glosses and diagrams discussed above demonstrate that Isidore was held in high regard in Frankish centres of learning. He is repeated verbatim, excerpted, and, along with other authorities, named as a source of information. Whether named or not, however, his high status is evidenced by the heavy use of the *Etymologiae* by Carolingian and Ottonian glossators. For instance, his reference work enriches what, according to Ottaviano, is likely to be the remnants of an ancient non-Servian Virgilian comment on the mythological *Chimera* now preserved in two 9th-century Virgil manuscripts.[77] In addition, we find verbal echoes and parallels with the *Etymologiae* in many glosses, as in the cases that follow.

The first set of glosses occurs in a 9th-century Virgil manuscript, Bern, Burgerbibliothek, MS 165 (second quarter of the 9th century, Tours).[78] Savage has shown that this manuscript is richly annotated in Carolingian minuscule by many hands drawing on a wealth of sources (e.g. Nonius, Solinus, Servius, Isidore, Festus Paulus, Philargyrius, and the Bern scholia). In the first example there are verbal echoes with the *Etymologiae*; in the second a considerable amount of the gloss repeats word for word a passage in Isidore:

> *Eclogue* 8.88
> (i) IN VLVA: Species pro genere. Herba quae et alga dicitur. Vlua autem proprie ab uligine terrae appellatur, quam uidemus in fontaneis locis nasci. (fol. 13v).[79]

> *Etymologiae* 17.9.100
> Vlua et typhus herbae [quae] circa fontes et paludes stagnisque nascuntur. Ex quibus ulva, id est alga mollis et quodammodo fungus, dicta ab uligine

> *Georgics* 1.194
> (ii) NITRO: Nitrum a loco sumpsit uocabulum. Nascitur enim in oppido Aegipti nomine Nitria, ex quo et medicinae fiunt. Huius natura non

76 O'Sullivan, *Glossae aeui Carolini*, 8, 4–8.

77 Silvia Ottaviano, "Scholia non serviana nei manoscritti carolingi di Virgilio: prime notizie degli scavi," *Exemplaria Classica: Journal of Classical Philology* 17 (2013), 231–37.

78 Bischoff, *Katalog* I, Nr. 541, 114.

79 Hagen, *Scholia Bernensia*, 989; John J. Savage, "The scholia in the Virgil of Tours, Bernensis 165," *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology* 36 (1925), 115.

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multum distat a sale; quo utuntur aliquando pro lomento, uel est herba lauatoria uel liquor in criptis Nitriae in similitudinem salis pinguedinem stringens. (fol. 19v).[80]

Etymologiae 16.2.7
Nitrum a loco sumpsit vocabulum; nascitur enim in oppido vel regione Aegypti Nitria, ex quo et medicinae fiunt et sordes corporum vestiumque lavantur. Huius natura non multum a sale distat; habet enim virtutem salis et similiter oritur canescentibus siccitate litoribus

The next two annotations are from Leiden VLF 48, a richly glossed 9th-century Martianus manuscript. In the first case, we find clear verbal overlap between Isidore and the gloss; in the second, the annotator has selected portions from a considerably longer Isidorian passage:

De nuptiis I.3
(i) LYRICA: Lirici poetae dicti apo tu lirin, i. a uarietate carminum, unde et lira a uarietate sonorum dicitur eo quod diuersi soni sint in illa.[81]

Etymologiae 8.7.4
Lyra dicta APO TOU LUREIN, id est a varietate vocum, quod diversos sonos efficiat

De nuptiis I.7
(ii) ADAMANTINIS: Adamans Grece, Latine dicitur indomitus, quia non potest domari nisi hyrcino sanguine.[82]

Etymologiae 16.13.2
Adamans Indicus lapis parvus et indecorus, ferrugineum habens colorem et splendorem crystalli, numquam autem ultra magnitudinem nuclei Avellani repertus. Hic nulli cedit materiae, nec ferro quidem nec igni, nec umquam incalescit; unde et nomen interpretatione Graeca indomita vis accepit. Sed dum sit invictus ferri ignisque contemptor, hircino rumpitur sanguine recenti et calido maceratus, sicque multis ictibus ferri perfrangitur

80 Hagen, *Scholia Bernensia*, 990; Savage, "The scholia in the Virgil of Tours," 118.
81 O'Sullivan, *Glossae aeui Carolini*, 22, 78–79.
82 O'Sullivan, *Glossae aeui Carolini*, 46, 21–22.

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The final example is from Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Clm 14395 (10th or 11th century, St Emmeram), a southern German Prudentius manuscript glossed by several hands. In the gloss below verbal parallels with the *Etymologiae* are evident:

> *Psychomachia*, Preface 50
> LINEA: Vt pictorum est futuras imagines quibusdam prius lineis adumbrare. Ita omnia in figura contingebant antiquis.[83]

> *Etymologiae* 19.16.2
> Vnde et nunc pictores prius umbras quasdam et lineas futurae imaginis ducent.

In all of the cases mentioned so far, glossators have either repeated Isidore verbatim or have echoed passages from the *Etymologiae*. Their annotations bear witness to the pervasive influence of Isidore on early medieval intellectual culture, further attested, as we shall see, by the heavy reliance of glossators on the *Etymologiae* for their Greek vocabulary.

6 Isidore and Greek in Carolingian and Ottonian Glosses

Carolingian and Ottonian glosses teemed with Greek and Greek-derived words (loanwords from Greek and transcriptions from Greek), as well as with Greek-Latin word pairs and etymologies. Many bilingual and Latin materials were available to supply the Greek word stock required by annotators to introduce Greek or pseudo-Greek vocabulary into their annotations, as well as to explain the Greek words and neologisms present in much-read texts, such as Martianus Capella's *De nuptiis*. By the 9th century, bilingual resources, such as Greek-Latin and Latin-Greek dictionaries, word lists, glossaries, hermeneumata (late antique schoolbooks), and idiomata, were in circulation.[84] Greek was also found in *Graeca collecta* (collections of Greek words quarried from the writings of Latin authors), lexicons, grammatical books, late Latin and early medieval writings, and especially in Patristic works.[85] While the *Etymologiae* was

83 O'Sullivan, *Early medieval glosses*, 156.

84 *Idiomata* were lists of Latin words or verbs governed by different cases to their Greek equivalents.

85 See Bernhard Bischoff, "Das griechische Element in der abendländische Bildung des Mittelalters," in *Mittelalterliche Studien*, vol. 2, 246–75; Anna Carlotta Dionisotti, "Greek grammars and dictionaries in Carolingian Europe," *The sacred nectar of the Greeks: The study of*

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clearly not the only source of Greek, it was an important one because of its rapid dissemination and use in major bilingual manuals. For example, Lendinara has demonstrated that a significantly large portion of the entries in the *Scholica graecarum glossarum*, a collection of Latin definitions of Greek words that circulated in England and the continent, was excerpted from Isidore and that many of the nonce words, primarily transcriptions from Greek, are also attested in some form in Isidore.[86] Often lemmata and *interpretamenta* in the *Scholica* simply repeat Isidore verbatim, follow him very closely,[87] or are heavily indebted to him.[88]

The influence of Isidore is further evidenced by other bilingual glossaries, such as the small glossary or collection of notes known under the title *Grammaticae artis nomina graece et latine notata*.[89] This glossary is attested in a number of manuscripts, the oldest of which date back to the 8th century.[90] Helmut Gneuss suggests that the glossary very likely originated in France in either the second half of the 7th or the first half of the 8th century, from whence it travelled to England and also to Italy relatively early.[91] The lemmata in the glossary comprise Greek or Greek-derived words which are accompanied by Latin glosses. A large number of the lemmata and glosses are drawn from the *Etymologiae*, a fact of which early readers would have been aware, as is

Greek in the West in the early Middle Ages, ed. Michael W. Herren (London: 1988), 1–56; Walter Berschin, *Greek Letters and the Latin Middle Ages from Jerome to Nicholas of Cusa*, trans. Jerold C. Frakes (Washington, D.C.: 1988); Pádraic Moran, "Greek in early medieval Ireland," *Multilingualism in the Graeco-Roman worlds*, eds. Alex Mullen and Patrick James (Cambridge: 2012), 172–92; Sinéad O'Sullivan, "The sacred and the obscure: Greek in the Carolingian reception of Martianus Capella," *The Journal of Medieval Latin* 22 (2012), 67–94.

86 Lendinara, "*Scholica Graecarum Glossarum*," 303–04.

87 See the *Scholica* entries under A6, P34, A64 and A65 in Lendinara, "*Scholica Graecarum Glossarum*," 331, 333, 336–37.

88 See the *Scholica* entries under Ox 144 and Ox 243 in Lendinara, "*Scholica Graecarum Glossarum*," 354, 357.

89 See Max L. Laistner, "Abbo of Saint-Germain-des-Prés," *Archivum Latinitatis Medii Aevi* 1 (1924), 29; Berschin, *Greek letters and the Latin Middle Ages*, 106, 110; Bernice Kaczynski, *Greek in the Carolingian Age. The St. Gall manuscripts* (Cambridge, MA: 1988), 62.

90 Helmut Gneuss, "A Grammarian's Greek-Latin Glossary in Anglo-Saxon England," in *From Anglo-Saxon to Early Middle English: Studies presented to Eric G. Stanley*, eds. Malcolm Godden, Douglas Gray and Terry Hoad (Oxford: 1994), 60–86; Louis Holtz, "Le Parisinus Latinus 7530, synthèse cassinienne des arts libéraux," *Studi medievali*, 3rd Series, 16 (1975), 97–152. The oldest manuscript appears to be from Tours: Wolfenbüttel, Herzog August Bibliothek, Guelf. Weiss. 86 (mid-8th-century, Tours). I am grateful to Franck Cinato for providing me with a bibliography relating to this glossary and a list of manuscripts transmitting the work.

91 Gneuss, "A Grammarian's Greek-Latin Glossary," 72–74.

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demonstrated by the rubric to the glossary in the oldest surviving manuscript dating to the middle of the 8th century now at Wolfenbüttel which includes a reference to Isidore.[92] Moreover, the glossary was not an isolated phenomenon, since many of its entries are found in other sources, for instance in the glossaries *Liber glossarum*, *Abstrusa*, *Abolita*, the First Corpus Glossary, the *Scholica graecarum glossarum*, and *Interpretatio nominum ebraicorum et grecorum*.[93] To illustrate Isidore's influence, I select a passage from one of the 8th-century manuscripts transmitting the *Grammaticae artis nomina graece et latine notata*, namely Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, lat. 7530 (third quarter of the 8th century, Monte Cassino).[94] The following entries at the very start of the glossary are derived from the *Etymologiae*:

> POEMA: unius libri opus
> POESIS: opus multorum librorum
> EDILYON: paucorum uersorum
> MONOSTICHON: unus uersus
> DISTICHON: duorum uersorum
> EPHODON: clausula in poemate
> EPIGRAMMA: titulus (fol. 145r22–28)
> *Etymologiae* 1.39.21–23
>
> Poesis dicitur Graeco nomine opus multorum librorum, poema unius, idyllion paucorum versuum, distichon duorum, monostichon unius. Epigramma est titulus, quod in Latinum superscriptio interpretatur; EPI enim super, GRAMMA littera vel scriptio dicitur. Epodon in poemate clausula brevis est. Dictum autem epodon, quod adcinatur ad speciem elegiaci, ubi praemisso uno longiore, alter brevior conponitur, atque in singulis quibusque maioribus sequentes minores quasi clausulae recinunt

What the *Grammaticae artis nomina graece et latine notata* and *Scholica graecarum glossarum* illustrate is that Isidore was used as a source of Greek words in bilingual manuals in the early medieval world. That Isidore was culled for *Graeca* is evidenced by Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, lat. 3088 (saec. IX, Rheims), which on fols 116r-121v transmits batches of glosses on mostly

92 Gneuss, "A Grammarian's Greek-Latin Glossary," 69, 79.

93 See Lendinara, "*Scholica Graecarum Glossarum*," 320–21. I am grateful to Franck Cinato who alerted me to the fact that the *Interpretatio nominum ebraicorum et graecorum* utilised the collection.

94 Bernhard Bischoff, "Die Bibliothek im Dienste der Schule," in *Mittelalterliche Studien*, vol. 3, 220.

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Greek terms drawn from the Hieronymian correspondence with explanations primarily derived from the *Etymologiae*.[95]

However, Isidore was not only used as a source of Greek information, but the appearance of Greek in the *Etymologiae* must surely have added value to the work. After all, we know that Greek enjoyed a high status in medieval Latin culture, as confirmed, for instance, by the Hellenism of figures like John Scottus Eriugena, Sedulius Scottus, and Heiric of Auxerre, the production of enormous Greek-Latin glossaries, such as Laon, Bibliothèque municipale, MS 444, and the high profile of Greek in the Latin liturgy.[96]

Such, therefore, was the context in which Isidore functioned as a source of Greek in the early Middle Ages. Isidore's Greek was used by compilers of all kinds, including glossators. In what follows, I shall look at the Greek or Greek-derived words in early medieval glosses demonstrating Isidorian influence, whether direct or indirect. It should be remembered, however, that a very different perspective on all things Greek was also prevalent in the 9th century, as illustrated by the *Opus Caroli*. Interestingly, Laura Carlson has demonstrated that Isidore, whose work is rooted in the importance of words and language, functioned as a vital source for Theodulf's attack on the Greeks.[97]

7 The Use of Isidore for Greek Information

With regards to the Greek words found in early medieval glosses, it is often the case that Isidore was either the source, that there are close parallels with the *Etymologiae*, or that analogues appear in Isidore and other works. Glossators looked to Isidore for Greek etymologies, Greek-Latin word pairs, and Latin etymologies of Greek or Greek-derived words, and to introduce Greek into their annotations. In the following example, the word *palla* (a woman's outer garment) is glossed with a Greek etymology and Latin explanation derived from Isidore. The gloss occurs in a fragmentary manuscript dated to the second third of the 9th century and originating in St Emmeram in Regensburg. The fragments of the manuscript, now dispersed, transmit the *Aeneid* accompanied

95 John J. Contreni, "John Scottus, Martin Hiberniensis, the liberal arts and teaching," in *Insular Latin studies: Papers on Latin texts and manuscripts of the British Isles, 550–1066*, ed. Michael W. Herren (Toronto: 1981), 23–44; John J. Contreni and Pádraig P. Ó Néill, *Glossae divinae historiae: the biblical glosses of John Scottus Eriugena* (Florence: 1997), 3–4.

96 See, for example, the chants for the Ordinary of the mass known as the *Missa graeca*; for which, see Kaczynski, *Greek in the Carolingian Age*, 99–113.

97 Carlson, "The use of Isidore in the *Opus Caroli*," 209–30.

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by glosses.[98] Silvia Ottaviano examined these fragments and discovered a close parallel between its glosses and those in another 9th-century codex, Montpellier MS 253.[99] Her critical edition of the gloss given below displays the influence of Isidore:

> *Aeneid* 1.648
> PALLAM palla ἀπὸ τοῦ πάλλειν πάλλειν id est a mobilitate: quadr[at] um pallium muliebris vestis deductum usque ad uestigia, auro et ordine gemmis ornatum.[100]

> *Etymologiae* 19.25.2
> Palla est quadrum pallium muliebris vestis, deductum usque ad vestigia, quod ad fixis in ordinem gemmis. Et palla dicta APO TOU PALLEIN, id est a mobilitate, quae est circa finem huiusmodi indumenti; sive quod rugis vibrantibus sinuata crispetur

The same Isidorian passage is echoed in another 9th-century glossed Virgil manuscript, Valenciennes, Bibliothèque municipale, MS lat. 407. It occurs in a gloss on *Pallas* and combines two Isidorian passages, namely *Etymologiae* 19.25.2 and 8.11.75, the second of which is found in Servius's commentary on the *Aeneid*.[101] Interestingly, both Isidorian passages occur in the *Liber glossarum* in the entries for *palla* and *Pallas*.[102]

> *Eclogue* 2.61
> PALLAS Pallas dicta est *apo tu pallein* id est a rugis quas habent matronae in uestibus suis siue a pallante gigante quem interfecit (fol. 4v)

> *Etymologiae* 8.11.75
> Pallas autem dicta vel ab insula Pallene in Thracia, in qua nutrita est; vel APO TOU PALLEIN TO DORU, id est ab hastae concussione; vel quod Pallantem gigantem occiderit

98 Bischoff, *Katalog* II, Nr. 3353, 276.

99 Ottaviano, "Scholia non serviana," 221–44.

100 Ottaviano, "Scholia non serviana," 238.

101 Thilo and Hagen, *Servii grammatici* I, 28, 7–9.

102 *Liber glossarum* PA86 and PA119. Wallace M. Lindsay, J.F. Mountford and Joshua Whatmough, eds., *Glossaria Latina iussu Academiae Britannicae edita*, vol. 1 (Paris: 1926), 420 [hereafter: *GL*]. I am grateful to Franck Cinato for sending me a provisional version of a new edition of the *Liber glossarum*, which I have used in conjunction with Lindsay's edition.

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Etymologiae 8.11.75 is also very likely the source of a gloss present in a miscellany transmitting a 9th-century copy of *De nuptiis*, namely Trier, Bibliothek des Priesterseminars, MS 100:

> *De nuptiis* I.40
> PALLAS Pallas Minerua dicta est, quod Pallantem gigantem interfecerit uel quod sicut putabant in Pallante palude nata est.[103]

Isidore, then, was a popular source for annotations on *palla* and *Pallas*, as is illustrated by the cases above, which derive their Latin explanations and Greek etymologies from his work. Overlap with glossaries such as the *Liber glossarum* may indicate that glossators excerpted Isidorian information second-hand.

In general, Isidore is often the source of Greek etymologies in glosses, as in glosses on *adamantinus* (incorruptible), explained in a number of 9th-century Martianus manuscripts as *adamans* (ἀδάμας "unconquerable") and *indomitus* (untamed), a pairing present in Isidore. In addition to the Greek-Latin word pair, there are verbal echoes of the *Etymologiae*:

> *De nuptiis* I.7
> ADAMANTINIS Adamans Grece, Latine dicitur indomitus, quia non potest domari nisi hyrcino sanguine[104]
> ADAMANTINIS Adamans lapis est indomabilis, qui nisi sanguine hyrcino temperatus in sua permanet duritia[105]

> *Etymologiae* 16.13.2
> Adamans Indicus lapis parvus et indecorus, ferrugineum habens colorem et splendorem crystalli, numquam autem ultra magnitudinem nuclei Avellani repertus. Hic nulli cedit materiae, nec ferro quidem nec igni, nec umquam incalescit; unde et nomen interpretatione Graeca indomita vis accepit. Sed dum sit invictus ferri ignisque contemptor, hircino rumpitur sanguine recenti et calido maceratus, sicque multis ictibus ferri perfrangitur

103 O'Sullivan, *Glossae aevi Carolini,* 160, 14–16. For details of the manuscript, see O'Sullivan, *Glossae Aevi Carolini*, ci-cvi.

104 O'Sullivan, *Glossae aevi Carolini,* 46, 21–22. For *adamantinus*, see Oscar Weise, *Die griechischen Wörter im Latein* (Leipzig: 1882), 329.

105 O'Sullivan, *Glossae aevi Carolini,* 46, 22–47, 1–2.

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A further example of a Greek-Latin word pair derived from Isidore occurs in annotations on *hyalinus* (of crystal/of glass) from ὑάλινος (of glass), which occur in 9th- and 10th-century Martianus manuscripts. The loanword is annotated with the Greek word *yalen* (ὕαλος "glass") and its Latin counterpart *vitrum* (glass). Though parallel explanations appear in both Isidore and the *Scholica graecarum glossarum*, the pairing is ultimately Isidorian:

> *De nuptiis* I.66
> HYALINOS *Yalen* enim uitrum est Grece[106]

> *Etymologiae* 20.5.1
> DE VASIS POTATORIIS … Phialae dictae quod ex vitro fiant; vitrum enim Graece VALOS dicitur

> *Scholica graecarum glossarum*
> H 6 HIALIN vitrum; P 5 Phiala eo quod fiat ex hialin, hoc est vitro. Hialin enim dicunt Graeci vitrum; Ox 236 Fiala ex Greco venit, vitrum enim graece hialin; dicuntur fialae eo quod fiat ex hialin id est ex vitro[107]

Isidore's usefulness, however, was not limited to Greek-Latin word pairs or Greek etymologies. Early medieval glossators also turned to him for Latin etymologies of Greek or Greek-derived words, as in the case of Phosphorus (Φωσφόρος), glossed as *lucem ferens* (bearing light) in 9th- and 10th-century Martianus manuscripts, an interpretation very likely drawn from Isidore:

> *De nuptiis* II.113
> PHOSPHORI Dicitur Venus Phosphorus, i. lucem ferens, unde et Lucifer et dicitur sonipedem habere, quia umbras prae ceteris facit stellis[108]

> *Etymologiae* 3.71.18
> Lucifer dictus eo quod inter omnia sidera plus lucem ferat

Moreover, Isidore was culled for Greek words incorporated by glossators into their annotations, as in glosses on *elementa* (elements) in 9th-century Martianus manuscripts. Here the glossators introduce the words *ilen* (ὕλη "matter")

106 O'Sullivan, *Glossae aevi Carolini,* 190, 11. For *hyalinus*, see Weise, *Die griechischen Wörter im Latein*, 63.

107 Lendinara, "*Scholica Graecarum Glossarum* and Martianus Capella," 332–33.

108 O'Sullivan, *Glossae aevi Carolini,* 285, 20. For *Phosphorus*, see Weise, *Die griechischen Wörter im Latein*, 492.

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and *stochia* (στοιχεῖα "elements") into their glosses, words which also had some circulation in medieval glossaries:[109]

> *De nuptiis* 1.1
> ELEMENTA … Ilen Grece dicitur materies sicut Isidorus dicit, quia stochia Grece, Latine elementa[110]

> *Etymologiae* 13.3.1–2
> DE ELEMENTIS …. Hanc ULEN Latini materiam appellaverunt, ideo quia omne informe, unde aliquid faciendum est, semper materia nuncupatur. Proinde et eam poetae silvam nominaverunt, nec incongrue, quia materiae silvarum sunt. Graeci autem elementa STOICHEIA nuncupant, eo quod sibi societatis concordia et communione quadam conveniant

In many cases, the Greek introduced by glossators into their annotations was widely known. For instance, standard Greek word-stock occurs in early medieval glosses, as in glosses on *Galaxia*, *Galumnate*, and *Galatea*, which draw on the same Greek etymology, namely γάλα "milk."[111] This underscores an important point. Many of the Greek or Greek-derived words present in early medieval glosses were commonplace, and analogues appear not only in Isidore but also in other sources. When glossing *hydraula* (ὕδραυλις or ὕδραυλος "a water organ"), for instance, glossators made explicit the Greek etymology of the word, itself a derivate of ὕδωρ (water). They offered the pairing ὕδωρ and *aqua*, which was well known.[112] Similarly, many of the Greek loanwords and their Latin counterparts in glosses were commonplace, for example, *cristallus*

109 For the circulation of these words in the *Scholica*, see Lendinara, "*Scholica Graecarum Glossarum* and Martianus Capella," 344–45 and 347–48. For the appearance of the term "element" (*stoicheon*, *elementum*) in grammatical discouse, see Irvine, *The making of textual culture*, 100.

110 O'Sullivan, *Glossae aeui Carolini*, 8, 4–8.

111 See glosses on *Galaxia* (O'Sullivan, *Glossae aevi Carolini,* 254, 9 on *De nuptiis* 1.97) and *Galumnate* (O'Sullivan, *Glossae aevi Carolini,* 194, 5 on *De nuptiis* 1.67). For the loanword *Galaxia*, see Weise, *Die griechischen Wörter im Latein*, 55. The gloss on *Galatea* is found as follows in the ninth-century glossed Virgil manuscript, Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, lat. 7926, fol. 2v: AMARYLLIS HABET GALATEA RELIQVIT Amaryllis et Galatea sicut iam diximus duae concubinae fuerunt Virgilii. Ergo per Amaryllidam intellege Romam, per Galatheam Mantuam. Interpretatur autem Galathea lactea dea, gala Grece, Latine lac, thea dea (on *Eclogue* 1.30).

112 HYDRAVLARVM *Hydor* Grece, Latine aqua; *Hydraula* organum de aqua factum (O'Sullivan, *Glossae aevi Carolini,* 293, 6–9 on *De nuptiis* 2.117). For these pairings, see the Cyrillus glossary in Georg Goetz, ed., *Corpus Glossariorum Latinorum*, vol. 2 (Leipzig: 1901), 462, 25 [hereafter: *CGL*]; *Hermeneumata*, *CGL* 3, 15, 13; 315, 26; 398, 20; Isidore, *Etymologiae* 4.6.15.

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(κρύσταλλος) *glacies* (ice).[113] So, too, were glosses on the loanword *palaestra* (παλαίστρα "a wrestling school"), often annotated with the Greek word πάλη (wrestling) and Latin counterpart *luctatio* (wrestling).[114] Glossators also drew on well-known associations, as in annotations on *Olympus*, glossed with the Greek word *ololampus* (ὁλολαμπής "shining all over"), analogues for which appear in Servius and Isidore.[115] And glosses discussing the significance of particular Greek letters could also have been gleaned from many sources, including Isidore. A good illustration of this is furnished by glosses on Prudentius's *Psychomachia* in 10th- and 11th-century manuscripts. In discussing the number three hundred in the prologue of the work, glossators linked it with the Greek letter Tau (with its numerical value of three hundred) and interpreted the Tau as an iconographic image of the cross.[116] The association was already well established in Patristic and early Christian thought and was given biblical authority through certain biblical passages, such as the story of Gideon defeating the Midianites with 300 men (Judg. 7:6–8) and that of Abraham rescuing Lot

113 CRYSTALLO Grece namque glacies *cristallos* (O'Sullivan, *Glossae aevi Carolini,* 217, 9 on *De nuptiis* 1.75). See also the *Liber Glossarum,* in *GL* 1, 153 and Isidore, *Etymologiae* 16.13.1. For *crystallus*, see Weise, *Die griechischen Wörter im Latein*, 394.

114 PALAESTRA Palestra dicta *apo tu palin*, hoc est rustica luctatione (O'Sullivan, *Glossae aevi Carolini,* 30, 31 on *De nuptiis* 1.5); PALESTRIS luctationibus uel luctis palestra uocatur lucta *apo tu palyn* id est a luctatione (Montpellier, Bibliothèque interuniversitaire, Section Médecine H 253, fol. 131v; *Aeneid* 6.642). For *palaestra*, a loanword from Greek, see Weise, *Die griechischen Wörter im Latein*, 48. For analogues in other sources, see Servius's commentary on *Georgics* 2.531 in *Servii grammatici qui feruntur in Vergilii carmina commentarii*, eds. Georg Thilo and Hermann Hagen, vol. 3.1 (Leipzig, 1887), 269, 20–22; Isidore, *Etymologiae* 18.24.1; *Liber Glossarum*, *GL* 1, 420; *GL* 2, 94; *GL* 3, 63; Cyrillus, *CGL* 2, 392, 47; *Hermeneumata*, *CGL* 3, 409, 42.

115 OLYMPI Olympus dicitur quasi *ololampus*, i. totus ardens (O'Sullivan, *Glossae aevi Carolini,* 407, 31 on *De nuptiis* 2.185); OLYMPVM Olympus dicitur quasi ololampus id est totus ardens (Valenciennes, Bibliothèque municipale, MS 407, fol. 22v; *Georgics* 1.282). See Servius's commentary on *Aeneid* 4.268 in Thilo and Hagen, *Servii grammatici*, vol. 1, 514, 19 and Isidore, *Etymologiae* 14.8.9.

116 See, e.g., the following gloss: *TRECENTI Tau greca litera quae similitudinem crucis habet istum numerum significat et sicut Abraam Loth trecentis uiris liberatur, sic Christus in cruce positus nos a diaboli potestate eripuit. Ad huc x restant, quia x uerba legis significat et viii, quia Christi uictoriam in viii die ad nostram redemptionem impletam significat*. O'Sullivan, *Early medieval glosses*, 159. The link between the Tau and cross is found in many sources, e.g.: *Ipsa est enim littera Graecorum Tau, nostra autem T, species crucis* (Tertullian, *Aduersus Marcionem*, 3.22.6, CCSL 1 (Turnhout: 1954), 539); *Tau littera crucis habet similitudinem* (Jerome, *In Hiezechielem*, 3.9.4–6, CCSL 75 (Turnhout: 1964), 106); *T ergo littera quae similitudinem crucis habet* (Hrabanus, *De laudibus s. crucis*, PL 107, col. 206B).

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with 318 followers (Gen. 14:14).[117] Isidore, then, although an important commentator on the letter Tau, was certainly not alone.[118]

In short, Isidore was one amongst many sources which glossators could draw upon for their knowledge of Greek words and letters. And very often the information in Isidore was commonplace. This brings us to another important point. The *Etymologiae* was part of a broad tradition of learning that included Isidore's sources and excerptors. The result was that Isidorian material was often to be found in a variety of different places. In the remaining section of this paper, I shall explore this aspect of Isidore's work. And I shall return to Isidore's intellectual inheritance, founded on the principles of encyclopaedism and etymology, demonstrating that these principles were very much evident in Carolingian and Ottonian glosses.

8 Isidore and His Intellectual Inheritance

The influence of the *Etymologiae*, whether direct or indirect, on early medieval glosses furnishes insight not only into the importance of Isidore but also the impact of his scholarly methods.[119] To begin with, there can be no doubt that etymology found a home in early medieval intellectual culture. Carolingian and Ottonian glosses are filled with etymologies of all kinds, as is vividly demonstrated by the opening glosses on Prudentius's *Psychomachia*, where 10th- and 11th-century annotators supplied the following exposition:

> *Psychomachia*
> Psiche Grece, Latine anima, machia autem interpretatur pugna animae (Clm 14395, fol. 141r)[120]

The above gloss dissects and subdivides the various components of the lemma, an essentially etymological strategy, and, in this particular instance, provides a

117 For example, Bede furnished an elaborate exegesis based on the Gideon story and Genesis 14:14. See Bede, *In Genesim* 2.9.28–9, 3.14.14, CCSL 118A (Turnhout: 1967), 140, 187.

118 Gregory, *Moralia in Job*, 30.25, CCSL 143B (1985), 1542; Isidore, *Quaestiones in Vetus Testamentum*, PL 83, col. 384C.

119 See Immo Warntjes' chapter on computus and Isidore's influence on the Irish in the early medieval period elsewhere in this volume, as well as Winston Black's chapter on Isidore's influence in scholastic Europe.

120 O'Sullivan, *Early medieval glosses*, 139.

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Latin equivalent and explanation of the Greek title of the work.[121] Moreover, Isidore very often took centre stage in the etymological expositions of early medieval annotators, as already witnessed by the heavy use of the *Etymologiae* for glosses on Greek or Greek-derived words.

With regards to the other major scholarly tradition which Isidore was indebted to, namely the encyclopaedic tradition, it was at the heart of early medieval glosses. Methodologically, the key principles underpinning encyclopaedism were very often at the core of glossing practice, that is, collecting, excerpting, and drawing on authorities. These practices will be explored further, as they provide valuable insight into how knowledge was constructed in the early Middle Ages. Above all, they underscore the centrality of a tradition of learning within which figures such as Isidore operated. And Isidore not only became part of a tradition of learning, but represented a pivotal moment within it.

Essential to many of Isidore's works were the authorities he drew upon.[122] His encyclopaedic work was not just a storehouse of information but a melting pot of sources, often gleaned through intermediaries. Isidore's use of the classical *auctores* must surely have resonated with the antiquarian interests of Carolingian and Ottonian scholars. Crucially, however, the *Etymologiae* did not simply draw upon earlier works but was itself excerpted by later writers. This means that Isidorian information is to be found in any one of a number of different sources. For example, in the following gloss either Servius, whose commentaries enjoyed a *floruit* in the early medieval period, or Isidore could have furnished the information. The gloss occurs in 11th-century Prudentius manuscripts emanating from East Frankish ecclesiastical centres:

> *Psychomachia* 47
> TELA Telum dicitur quicquid iaci potest
>
> Servius, *Commentary on Aeneid* 2.468
> Telum … quicquid longe iaci potest[123]
>
> *Etymologiae* 18.7.10
> Telum … quidquid longe iaci potest

Similarly, the gloss given below, also present in Prudentius manuscripts, could have been gleaned from Servius, Isidore, or Hrabanus Maurus:

121 For the strategies of subdivision and dissection, integral to etymologising, see Amsler, *Etymology*, 143.

122 Fontaine, *Isidore*, vol. 1, p. x.

123 Thilo and Hagen, *Servii grammatici*, vol. 1, 291, 8–9.

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Psychomachia 349
ALAM Alae dicuntur equites, quia in morem alarum tegunt pedites

Servius, *Commentary on Aeneid* 4.121
ALAE equites: ob hoc 'alae' dicti, quia pedites tegunt alarum vice[124]

Servius, *Commentary on Aeneid* 11.604
ALA CAMILLAE equitatus. 'alae' autem dicuntur equites, quod alarum vice pedestrem exercitum tegunt[125]

Etymologiae 9.3.62
Alae autem equites ob hoc dicti, quia tegunt pedites alarum vice

Hraban, *De universo* 16.3
Alae autem equites ab hoc dicti, quia tegunt pedites, alarum vice

Given the prevalence of Isidore in East Frankish ecclesiastical centres and in the early medieval West more generally it is likely that the two Prudentius glosses mentioned above were excerpted from the Spaniard. Nevertheless, other sources were possible. In addition, Isidore's sources drew on earlier works, which again multiplies the range of possible sources from which glossators could have gleaned their material, as is illustrated by glosses on the mountain *Falernus* in 10th- and 11th-century Prudentius manuscripts. The information on *Falernus* can be traced back to Solinus, whose work is used by Servius, himself well known in the early medieval world. Servius, in turn, provides Isidore with his material.[126] Similarly, for the gloss IVPPITER *iuuans pater*, which occurs in a 9th-century Martianus manuscript, the information goes back to Cicero and is mediated by Lactantius, Servius, and Isidore.[127] A similar situation arises for the correlation of *Vesta* with *uiua flamma* in 9th-century glossed Martianus manuscripts.[128] The explication occurs in Ovid, whose work is cited by

124 Thilo and Hagen, *Servii grammatici*, vol. 2, 484, 25–26.

125 Thilo and Hagen, *Servii grammatici*, vol. 2, 551, 1–2.

126 FALERNI *Falernus mons est Campaniae in quo obtimum uinum nascitur*. For analogues, see *C. Iulii Solini Collectanea Rerum Memorabilium*, ed. T. Mommsen (Berlin: 1895), 98; Thilo and Hagen, *Servii grammatici*, vol. 3.1, 227, 19–20 (on *Georgics* 2.96); Isidore, *Etymologiae* 20.3.6.

127 O'Sullivan, *Glossae aeui Carolini*, 168, 29 (on *De nuptiis* 1.42). For the same information, see Cicero, *De natura deorum* 2.64, eds. Otto Plasberg and Wilhelm Ax (Stuttgart: 1961; ed. stereotypa 1933), 74, 11; Lactantius, *Divinae institutiones* 1.11.40, eds. Eberhard Heck and Antonie Wlosok, vol. 1 (Berlin: 2006), 50; Thilo and Hagen, *Servii grammatici*, vol. 1, 575, 3 (on *Aeneid* 4.638); Isidore, *Etymologiae* 8.11.34.

128 O'Sullivan, *Glossae aeui Carolini*, 209, 1 (on *De nuptiis* 1.72)

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Lactantius, Isidore, and Hrabanus.[129] Moreover, Isidore's excerptors could also have provided glossators with their material, as exemplified by the annotation on Vulcan, interpreted as *volans candor* in the Martianus manuscript, Leiden, Universiteitsbibliotheek, BPL 36 (end of the 9th century, Lorsch?). The explanation is attested in the *Etymologiae* and also in Hrabanus Maurus and Sedulius Scottus.[130] Thus, we have, in effect, chains of authorities often transmitting similar material and reinforcing one another.

To further complicate matters, Isidore very often transmitted information that was commonplace, as is illustrated by the following examples. In the first case, a grammatical term *sarcasmos* is glossed as *hostilis inrisio* in 11th-century Prudentius manuscripts. The explanation could have been derived from a number of grammatical works, including Donatus and Bede,[131] or from Servius, Cassiodorus, and Isidore.[132] In the second case, the god Mercury is annotated as *medius currens* in the 9th- and 10th-century Martianus manuscripts.[133] The interpretation occurs in Augustine and is repeated in Isidore, in Hrabanus Maurus, and in the Vatican Mythographers.[134] In the third case, glossators of *De nuptiis* annotated *crepusculum* as *dubia lux*, an explanation present in Nonius, Isidore, Bede, Hrabanus, and the *Scholica graecarum glossarum*.[135]

129 Ovid, *Fasti* 6.291, in *P. Ovidi Nasonis Fastorum libri sex*, eds. Ernst H. Alton, Donald E.W. Wormell, and Edward Courtney (Leipzig: 1978), 147; Lactantius, *Diuinae institutiones* 1.12.6, eds. Eberhard Heck and Antonie Wlosok, vol. 1 (Berlin, 2006), 56; Isidore, *Etymologiae* 8.11.6; Hrabanus, *De universo* 15.6, PL 111, col. 431C.

130 LEMNIVS … FABER Vulcanus interpretatur amor uoluptatis et dicitur quasi uolans candor (O'Sullivan, *Glossae aeui Carolini*, 41, 2–3 on *De nuptiis* 1.7). For the interpretation *uolans candor*, see Isidore, *Etymologiae* 8.11.39; Hrabanus, *De universo* 15.6, PL 111, col. 429B; Sedulius Scottus, *In Donati artem maiorem*, ed. Bengt Löfstedt, CCCM 40B (Turnhout: 1977), 135, 16. For the Leiden manuscript, see O'Sullivan, *Glossae aeui Carolini*, l-lv.

131 Diomedes, *Ars Grammatica*, in *Grammatici Latini*, vol. 1 (Leipzig: 1855), 462; Donatus, *Ars Grammatica*, in *Grammatici Latini*, vol. 4 (Leipzig: 1864), 402; Pompeius, *Commentum artis Donati*, in *Grammatici Latini*, vol. 5 (Leipzig: 1923), 312; Bede, *De Schematibus et Tropis*, 2.211, CCSL 123A (Turnhout 1975), 164.

132 Thilo and Hagen, *Servii grammatici*, vol. 2, 448, 28 (on *Aeneid* 10.557); Cassiodorus, *Expositio in Psalmum*, 134, CCSL 98 (Turnhout: 1958), 1220; Isidore, *Etymologiae*, 1.37.29.

133 O'Sullivan, *Glossae aeui Carolini*, 3, 8–9.

134 Augustine, *De ciuitate dei* 7.14 in *Sancti Aurelii Augustini episcopi De ciuitate dei libri XXII*, ed. Bernardus Dombart and Alfonsus Kalb (Stuttgart: 1993, ed. stereotypa 1928), 292, 2; Isidore, *Etymologiae* 8.11.45; Hrabanus Maurus, *De universo* 15.6, PL 111, col. 429D; *Mythographi Vaticani I et II*, ed. Péter Kulcsár, CCSL 91C (Turnhout: 1987), 48, 138.

135 Nonius, *De compendiosa doctrina libros XX*, ed. Wallace M. Lindsay (Hildesheim: 1964; ed. stereotypa 1903), 20; Isidore, *Etymologiae* 5.31.7; Bede, *De temporum ratione* 7.89 in *Opera Didascalica*, ed. Charles W. Jones, CCSL 123B (Turnhout: 1977), 299; Lendinara, "*Scholica Graecarum Glossarum* and Martianus Capella," 322 and 325; Laistner, "Notes," 450, 12; Hrabanus Maurus, *De universo* 10.7, PL 111, col. 292C.

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In sum, the information in Isidore was frequently not unique, and the *Etymologiae* itself was part of a tradition of learning which included Isidore's sources and their sources, as well as his excerptors. That Isidore was part of a tradition reinforced his authority. Moreover, the *Etymologiae* was not simply part of a tradition, but often at the centre of it. Some indication of its importance is illustrated by glosses on the beryl in 11th-century Prudentius manuscripts. According to the annotators, the jewel has a hexagonal shape and designates perfection.[136] The information on the beryl in a gloss excerpted from Bede can be traced back to Pliny and Solinus, who in turn provide Isidore with his material.[137] Bede, however, adds an allegorical interpretation not found in the earlier sources. And his exposition is excerpted by the 9th-century compilers Hrabanus and Smaragdus.[138] The glossators, therefore, were drawing on a tradition that stretched back to Pliny and forward to Bede and Carolingian scholars, with Isidore emerging as a vital link.

9 Compiling and Constructing Knowledge

It is clear that the *Etymologiae* represents an important moment in the transmission of knowledge and that Isidore's reliance on authorities reflects a practice at the heart of the encyclopaedic tradition and of glossing more generally where annotators assembled material from a variety of sources. Collecting

136 O'Sullivan, *Early medieval glosses*, 115–16.

137 *India eos gignit, raro alibi repertos. Poliuntur omnes sexangula figura artificum ingeniis, quoniam hebes unitate surda color repercussu angulorum excitetur. Aliter politi non habent fulgorem*. Pliny, *Historia naturalis* 37.20.76 in *C. Plini Secundi Naturalis historiae libri XXXVII*, eds Karl Mayhoff and Jan Ludwig (Stuttgart: 1967; ed. stereotypa 1892–1909); *Beryllos in sexangulas formas Indi atterunt, ut hebetem coloris lenitatem angulorum repercussu excitent ad vigorem. Beryllorum genus dividitur in speciem multifariam: eximii intervirente glauci et caeruli temperamento quandam praeferunt puri maris gratiam*. See *C. Iulii Solini Collectanea rerum memorabilium*, ed. Mommsen, 195; *Beryllus in India gignitur, gentis suae lingua nomen habens, viriditate similis smaragdo, sed cum pallore. Politur autem ab Indis in sexangulas formas, ut hebetudo coloris repercussu angulorum excitetur; aliter politus non habet fulgorem*. Isidore, *Etymologiae* 16.7.5.

138 *Berillus est quasi consideres aquam solis fulgore percussam, rubicundum ac decorum reddere colorem. Sed non fulget, nisi in sexangulam formam poliendo figuretur. Repercussu enim angulorum splendor illius acuitur. Significat autem homines ingenio quidem sagaces, sed amplius supernae gratiae lumine refulgentes. Nam quod aqua, sensus altitudinem designet…Nam senario saepe numero perfectio designatur actionis…In berillo, praedicantium perfecta operatio*. Bede, *Expositio Apocalypseos*, CCSL 121A (Turnhout: 2001), 545; Hrabanus Maurus, *De universo*, 17.7, PL 111, col. 468C; Smaragdus, *Collectiones in Epistolas et Evangelia*, PL 102, col. 335D.

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knowledge, an essential part of the encyclopaedic inheritance, appears to have been an important function of early medieval glossing. In the final section of this paper, I shall explore further the encyclopaedic practice of *compilatio* in order to demonstrate how glossators were gathering information. Glossators combined material from Isidore with other sources, as well as incorporated Isidore into works.

To begin with, early medieval glossators did not simply collect, but often arranged material from different sources in various ways. For instance, they sometimes gathered citations from various works in a gloss. Such practices suggest the associative and interrelated nature of knowledge, as already illustrated by the gloss on *Aeneid* 7.637 that drew the reader from Virgil to Isidore and back to Virgil again. The following glosses, which display heavy Isidorian influence, underscore how knowledge was compiled. The first case demonstrates the interrelated nature of learning, as well as the importance of authorities. Found in a 9th-century Virgil manuscript, the gloss transmits material from three named sources: Isidore, Virgil, and Lucan. It also contains an intertextual reference to Virgil in the piece excerpted from Isidore and this reference, in turn, leads the reader back to the lemma:

> *Eclogue* 1.62
> AVT ARARIM PARTHVS BIBET AVT GERMANIA TIGRIM: … fluens. Quod dificiditatem (*lege difficultatem*) haberet, si Parthus bibisset fIuuium Orientis Isidoro dicente: Ararim fluuius Orientis, de quo Virgilius ait "aut Ararim Parthus bibet." Tamen Lucanus dicit "Rodanum morantem praecipitauit Arar." Sed sic soluitur, quod Arar fIuuius Galliae est, de quo hic Virgilius dicit, Araris autem est in Oriente, de quo non dixit (Bern, Burgerbibliothek, MS 167, fol. 7r)[139]

The second example, present in 9th-century Virgil manuscripts, comprises, as Ottaviano has shown, a patchwork of three unnamed sources: Augustine, Isidore, and Servius:[140]

> *Aeneid* 4, 246
> Atlas rex fuit Aethiopum uel Africae, frater Promethei, maternus auus Mercurii maioris, cuius nepos fuit Tri<s>megistus; et iste Mercurius eo

139 Funaioli, *Esegesi Virgiliana*, 151. See *Eclogue* 1.62; Lucan, *De Bello Civili* 6.475–6 in *M. Annaei Lucani De bello civili libri x*, ed. David Roy Shackleton Bailey (Stuttgart: 1988), 150; Isidore, *Etymologiae* 13.21.13.

140 Ottaviano, "11 *Reg. lat*. 1669," 294–95.

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> tempore quo Moyses natus est fuisse reperitur a quo Atlante astrologiae artem prius dicitur excogitatam et ideo dictus est sustinuisse caelum. Vnde occasionem fabula inuenit ut eum caelum portare confingeret, quamuis mons eius nomine nuncuparetur; ob eruditionem igitur disciplinae et scientiam caeli nomen eius in montem Africae diriuatum est qui nunc Atlas cognominatur: qui propter altitudinem suam quasi caeli machinam atque astra sustentare uidetur. Qui Atlas, cum audisset oraculo cauendum esse a Iouis filio et timore nullum susciperet, a Perseo in montem conuersus est uiso Gorgonis capite, eo quod illum noluit suscipere (Oxford, Bodleian Library, Auct. F. 2. 8, fol. 98r; Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, MS Reg. lat. 1669, fol. 85r)

The first half of the above gloss draws on Augustine and Isidore, the final section on Servius.[141] What makes the arrangement interesting is that we find the same passages from Augustine and Isidore, as Ottaviano has noted, in the *Liber glossarum* for the entry on *Athlans*.[142] Indeed, the *Liber glossarum*, itself excerpting from Virgil glosses, may in turn very well have been used by early medieval glossators of Virgil. In the third case, found in a 9th-century glossed Virgil manuscript, two sources, Servius and Isidore, are merged into a single annotation:

> *Georgics* 1.94
> RASTRIS rastri eo quod radunt terram [= Servius] siue a raritate dentium dicuntur [= Isidore] (Bern, Burgerbibliothek, MS 165, fol. 17v)[143]

In the above examples, Isidore is interwoven with and cited alongside other authorities by early medieval glossators, an indication not only of his status

141 See Augustine, *De civitate dei* 18.39 (*eo quippe tempore, quo moyses natus est, fuisse reperitur atlans ille magnus astrologus, promethei frater, maternus auus mercurii maioris, cuius nepos fuit trismegistus iste mercurius*) and 18.8 (*frater eius atlans magnus fuisse astrologus dicitur; unde occasionem fabula inuenit, ut eum caelum portare confingeret; quamuis mons eius nomine nuncupetur, cuius altitudine potius caeli portatio in opinionem uulgi uenisse uideatur*); Isidore, *Etymologiae* 14.8.17 (*Athlans frater Promethei fuit et rex Africae, a quo astrologiae artem prius dicunt excogitatam; ideoque dictus est sustinuisse caelum. Ob eruditionem igitur disciplinae et scientiam caeli nomen eius in montem Africae deriuatum est, qui nunc Athlans cognominatur: qui propter altitudinem suam quasi caeli machinam atque astra sustentare uidetur*); Thilo and Hagen, *Servii grammatici*, vol. 1, 509, 19–23 (*nam rex fuit. qui cum audisset oraculo, cavendum esse a Iovis filio, et timore nullum susciperet, a Perseo in montem conversus est viso Gorgonis capite, eo quod illum noluit suscipere. ut autem in primo diximus, peritus astrologiae fuit: nam et Herculem docuit*).

142 *Liber glossarum* AT 30–35. See *GL* 1, 70.

143 Thilo and Hagen, *Servii grammatici*, vol. 3.1, 154, 12–13; Isidore, *Etymologiae* 20.14.6.

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but also of how knowledge was being made. Glossators combined and stockpiled information from authorities. This is in line with early medieval glossing practices, which often encoded the glossed text with all kinds of references to authoritative sources. Whilst the context of such practices is difficult to ascertain, the encyclopaedic endeavour was evidently very much at the heart of them.[144]

Moreover, the practice of compiling material is also evident in how Isidore is added to other works, as is illustrated, for instance, by the Isidorian interpolations in Virgilian commentaries. Isidore not only himself drew heavily on Virgilian commentary, but over time excerpts from the *Etymologiae* were added to collections and anthologies of Virgil comments. For example, a passage from Isidore (*Etymologiae* 1.39.16) is incorporated into the prologue of the *Explanatio in Bucolica Vergilii* ascribed to Iunius Philargyrius.[145] The *Explanatio* (in two recensions) is related to the *Brevis expositio* on the first and part of the second book of the *Georgics*, and to the more substantial set of glosses on the *Eclogues* and *Georgics* known as the Bern scholia, which were in circulation by the 9th century.[146] The same Isidorian passage occurs in two other closely related manuscripts which transmit a commentary on the *Eclogues*: British Library, Harley MS 2782 (9th century, Northeast France) and Valenciennes, Bibliothèque municipale, MS lat. 394 (late 9th century, *prov.* St Amand).[147] Given

144 There is ongoing scholarly debate about the function of glosses, a debate which originally pivoted around the notions of classroom teaching and private reading. The *locus classicus* for this debate is to be found in Gernot R. Wieland, "The glossed manuscript: classbook or library book?," *Anglo-Saxon England* 14 (1985), 153–73 and Michael Lapidge, "The Study of Latin Texts in late Anglo-Saxon England: [1] The Evidence of Latin Glosses," in *Latin and the Vernacular Languages in Early Medieval Britain*, ed. Nicholas Brooks (Leicester: 1982), 99–140.

145 Thilo and Hagen, *Servii grammatici*, vol. 3.2, 10, 14–26; Funaioli, *Esegesi Virgiliana*, 23, 119.

146 Debate surrounds the origin of these glosses with some scholars arguing that the collection was assembled in early medieval Ireland and others that it was edited there. These two opposing viewpoints are encapsulated by Brent Miles and Michael Herren. The former argues that there is no need "to posit a separate late antique collection…distinct from the one which we know existed in Ireland and was taken to the continent, replete with Christian content and glosses in Old Irish." Miles calls the entire collection the "Irish Filargirian collection." See Brent Miles, *Heroic saga and classical epic in medieval Ireland* (Cambridge: 2011), 32. Herren, on the other hand, argues that the collection was edited in Ireland: Michael W. Herren, "Literary and glossarial evidence for the study of classical mythology in Ireland A.D. 600–800," in *Text and Gloss: Studies in Insular learning and literature presented to Joseph Donovan Pheifer*, eds. Helen Conrad-O'Briain, Anne Marie D'Arcy and John Scattergood (Dublin: 1999), 55–61, 67.

147 For the Harley manuscript, see O'Sullivan, "Servius in the Carolingian Age." The origin of the Valenciennes manuscript is unclear but its provenance can be located in Saint Amand. See Funaioli, *Esegesi*, pp. 22–23, 444. Bischoff, *Katalog* III, Nr. 6388, 399 says it is probably last quarter of the ninth century.

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the close relationship between the *Explanatio in Bucolica Vergilii* and the so-called Bern scholia it is no surprise that identical material is present in both.

Isidore, however, was not only added to the prologues of Virgilian commentaries, but Isidorian material also appears in the body of such works, for example, in the glosses attributed to Philargyrius, in the *Brevis expositio*, and in the Bern scholia.[148] Moreover, Isidore is often mentioned by name in the Bern scholia.[149] And Isidore occurs frequently alongside Servian material in 9th-century manuscripts, as in the following glosses in Montpellier MS 253:

> PARNASIA RVPES Parnasia rupes mons Tesaliae Apollini consecratus est (fol. 10v; see Thilo and Hagen, *Servii grammatici* III.1, 69, 7)

> PARNASIA RVPES Parnasus mons Tesaliae … Habet duo capita: Chirram quae Apollini, Nisam quae est consecreta Libero Patri (fol. 10v; see *Etymologiae* 14.4.12; 14.8.11)

The first annotation draws on Servius; the second on two Isidorian passages. More generally, the appearance of Isidore in Virgilian glosses bears testimony to the plethora of non-Servian additions in early medieval glossed Virgil manuscripts. Cumulatively, the evidence demonstrates that Isidore was both heavily used by early medieval glossators of Virgil, and incorporated into existing Virgilian commentaries.

10 Conclusion

What, then, can we conclude from the above case studies about the use of Isidore in Carolingian and Ottonian glosses? Given the wide dissemination of the *Etymologiae* and the well-known influence of Isidore, it is hardly a surprise that he is heavily deployed by early medieval glossators who looked to him as

148 For the commentary attributed to Philargyrius, see glosses on *Eclogue* 3.8, which draw on Isidore, *Etymologiae* 12.1.14 and on *Eclogue* 9.36, which draw on Isidore, *Etymologiae* 12.7.18 in Thilo and Hagen, *Servii grammatici*, vol. 3.2, 50, 18–51, 3; 172, 13–18. In the *Brevis expositio* and Bern scholia, the comment on *Georgics* 1.27 (*AVCTOREM FRVGVM "Auctor" ab augendo dictus*) draws on Isidore, *Etymologiae* 10.2.1. See Luca Cadili, David Daintree and Marius Geymonat, eds., *Scholia Bernensia in Vergilii Bucolica et Georgica. Vol II. Fasc. I. In Georgica Commentarii* (*Prooemium/Liber I 1–42*) (Amsterdam: 2003), 102–03.

149 Isidore is mentioned by name in *Bucolics* 3.111 and 9.29 and *Georgics* 1.50 and 1.88. Hagen, *Scholia Bernensia*, 775, 830, 849. In addition, the Bern scholia transmits material common to both Servius and Isidore. For which, see the prologue of the *Georgics*, as well as *Georgics* 1.30 in Cadili *et al.*, eds., *Scholia Bernensia*, 4–5, 106.

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a source of information on all manner of subjects, including Greek or Greek-derived words. And glossators, focussed on the exposition of the lemma (usually a word or words), found a readily available resource in the *Etymologiae*, the cornerstone of which was words and their origins. Moreover, given the influence of Isidore's scholarly methods, namely encyclopaedism and etymology, it is not surprising that these methods are evident in the glossing practices of early medieval annotators.[150] Glosses, however, provide first-hand evidence that encyclopaedism and etymology were standard scholarly tools in early medieval centres of learning. In Carolingian and Ottonian glosses, the etymological drive is ubiquitous and underscores the importance of the word in the intellectual culture of the early Middle Ages, an importance highlighted by Isidore himself and one that is inscribed in the very practice of glossing, that is, in the interpretation of an authoritative text word by word. As for the encyclopaedic tradition, it is attested in the methods of early medieval annotators who collected and excerpted material from a "forest" of sources, demonstrating that the principle of *compilatio*, which infused many different kinds of writings, was also at play in their efforts.[151] Early medieval glosses thus provide first-hand evidence that the scholarly practices at the heart of the *Etymologiae* remained essential to early medieval scholars in their endeavour to gain access to and construct knowledge. More crucially, the twin traditions of encyclopaedism and etymology, at the core of early medieval glossing and of textual culture more generally, demonstrate how it was that scholars in the 9th, 10th, and 11th centuries elucidated texts and created storehouses of knowledge culled from the authorities of the past, amongst whom Isidore indubitably was fundamental.[152]

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150 Such methods were integral to the notion of the ideal encyclopaedist, the Christian Varro, and to the art of *grammatica*, "with all of its apparatus for understanding the modes of signifying in texts," Irvine, *The making of textual culture*, 189.

151 For the principle of compilation and the trope of the "forest" (*silva*) commonly used for *compilatio*, see Irvine, *The making of textual culture*, 428.

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CHAPTER 18

Isidore of Seville in Scholastic Europe

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1 Introduction

In the decade between 1416 and 1426 an Italian scribe and notary named Bartolomeo Landi de Landis, a native of Prato working in Volterra, made a complete copy of Dante's *Commedia*.[1] The *Commedia* covers the majority of the manuscript, but for some eighty folios after it Landi and three other scribes copied a variety of theological and philosophical works in Italian and Latin by St Augustine, Cicero, St Thomas Aquinas, and St Bernard of Clairvaux. The primary work in this section is the *Sententiae* of Isidore of Seville.[2] A copy of Dante in an Italian manuscript of 1426 is hardly surprising. But what do we make of Dante being copied by the same scribe with a Visigothic-era theological treatise at that time some eight centuries old, a treatise, moreover, which another Renaissance Italian scribe saw fit to complete when Landi had stopped? Hadn't Isidore long since been relegated to the Dark Ages, surpassed by the great theologians and encyclopedists of the scholastic age? Why copy Isidore's *Sententiae* when Peter Lombard's own *Sententiae*, the most important theological textbook of the scholastic era, could be found in any school in Europe, along with countless commentaries on it, including one by Aquinas?

Dante himself can help us answer these questions, for he was among those who helped keep Isidore's spirit alive in the later Middle Ages. In the tenth canto of his *Paradiso*, Dante meets Aquinas in the Fourth Heaven, the Sphere of the Sun. Saint Thomas is one of the blessed souls eternally dancing in the circle of Prudence, each soul breathing flame or crowned with fire, symbolizing his or her wisdom. As Dante's guide, Thomas describes for him the identity and achievements of each flaming soul. Thomas indicates one triad of prudent men, namely Isidore, Bede, and Richard of Saint-Victor, who are praised for their powers of investigation in life, which had transcended the ability of normal men (*Paradiso* 10: 130–32: "Vedi oltre fiammeggiar l'ardente spiro/

1 Now John Rylands Library, University of Manchester, It. 49, described by N.R. Ker, *Medieval Manuscripts in British Libraries*, 5 vols (Oxford: 1969–2002), 3:461–63.

2 Landi copied most of this text (fols 177r–206r), but another scribe finished book 3 (fols 206v–226v).

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d'Isidoro, di Beda e di Riccardo,/che a considerare fu più che viro."). Dante, writing in the early 14th century, not only considered Isidore a distinguished father of the Church, but he also imagined that Saint Thomas (nearly Dante's contemporary) thought the same. He was correct in this estimation, for Thomas is one of many scholastic authors of the high and later Middle Ages who respected Isidore's authority and carefully used his works in their own writings.

The claim that Isidore's works continued to be read and used in the time of Aquinas or Dante is, however, more controversial than might appear at first glance. Until recently, the scholarly consensus had been that Isidore and his writings were almost wholly supplanted in the 12th and 13th centuries by the works of scholastic theologians like Abelard, Peter Lombard, and Aquinas, and that Isidore's famous *Etymologiae* in particular were replaced by the new encyclopedias of Alexander Neckam, Vincent of Beauvais, and Bartholomew the Englishmen.[3] According to this thesis, the cultural developments of the "Renaissance of the Twelfth Century"—the rediscovery of Aristotelian physics and Galenic medicine, the translation of Arabic and Greek works into Latin, the rise of cathedral schools and creation of the first universities, and the establishment of new social and legal structures to manage a rapidly growing population—created an intellectual climate inimical to the survival of an early medieval relic like Isidore. But this consensus is more historiographical than historical, a product of generations of scholars who have been more interested in Isidore's impact on the cultures of Anglo-Saxon England or Carolingian Francia, to the neglect of Isidore's place in later centuries.[4]

The problems ensuing from this bias toward tracing Isidore's influence only in the early Middle Ages are compounded by the editors of Isidore's works,

3 This thesis is associated most with Jacques Fontaine, who repeated it as recently as 2000 in his monograph *Isidore de Séville. Genèse et originalité de la culture hispanique au temps des Wisigoths* (Turnhout: 2000), 413–14.

4 See, for example, B. Bischoff, "Die europäische Verbreitung der Werke Isidors von Sevilla," *Isidoriana. Estudios sobre San Isidoro de Sevilla en el XIV centenario de su nascimiento*, ed. Manuel C. Díaz y Díaz (León: 1961), 317–44; M. Reydellet, "La diffusion des *Origines* d'Isidore de Séville au Haut Moyen Âge," *Mélanges d'archéologie et d'histoire* 78 (1966), 383–437; Jacques Fontaine, "La figure d'Isidore de Séville à l'époque carolingienne," in *L'Europe héritière de l'Espagne wisigothique. Colloque international du CNRS Paris, 14–16 mai 1990*, eds. Jacques Fontaine and Christine Pellistrandi (Madrid: 1992), 195–211. See also, the chapters in this volume by Mark Tizzoni, Martin J. Ryan, and Sinéad O'Sullivan. There are two essays specifically on the Carolingian reception of Isidore in *Isidore of Seville and his Reception in the Early Middle Ages*, eds. Andrew Fear and Jamie Wood (Amsterdam: 2016), namely, Melissa Markauskas, "Rylands MS Latin 12: A Carolingian Example of Isidore's Reception into the Patristic Canon," 177–207; and Laura Carlson, "Adoption, Adaptation, & Authority: The Use of Isidore in the Opus Caroli," 209–30.

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who typically (and usually with good reason) use only the earliest manuscripts of the 7th through 9th (and, less often, 10th) centuries.[5] This is the case with both William Lindsay's edition of the *Etymologiae* and the multivolume *Etymologiae* still in preparation by the Paris Société d'Édition *Les Belles Lettres* (1983–2010),[6] or, for example, with María Adelaida Andrés Sanz's edition of Isidore's *Liber Differentiarum* [II], for which she used manuscripts only through the 10th century. While we can trust Andrés Sanz when she says the manuscripts from the 11th through 16th centuries add no significant variant readings to her edition, it is unfortunate that she does not at least list those later manuscripts.[7] However, more extensive research into manuscripts and citations of Isidore demonstrates that some of his works, particularly the *Etymologiae*, were copied and read throughout the scholastic period (which I define generously as *c*.1000–1500) alongside new texts, and that other Isidorian works like the *Synonyma* gained even greater popularity in the later Middle Ages and were read in novel ways by new ascetic and spiritual movements.[8]

Some historians, to be sure, have long recognized this lasting influence of Isidore and his writing and the monumental task involved in charting this influence. Already in 1894 Theodor Mommsen marked the length of Isidore's shadow over the later medieval period: "the complete enumeration of later medieval works based on Isidore would have neither utility nor end."[9] A century later, Jacques Verger remained nearly as despairing as *die Große Mommsen* of tracing the influence of Isidore after the turn of the first millennium: "le sujet est immense et demanderait des dépouillements presque infinis."[10] At long last, this historical lacuna in Isidore studies is starting to be filled, most evidently by this volume and by a collection of ten essays published in 2008 and

5 This does not mean, of course, that we should stop tracing Isidore's influence in the early medieval period, which is the subject of many of the chapters in Fear and Wood, *Isidore of Seville and His Reception in the Early Middle Ages*, as well as of several essays in a special issue of the journal *Antiquité tardive* 23 (2015), dedicated to "Isidore de Séville et son temps," edited by Isabel Velázquez and Gisela Ripoll.

6 Wallace M. Lindsay, ed., *Isidori Hispalensis episcopi Etymologiarum sive Originum libri XX*, 2 vols (Oxford: 1911). For an example of the modern editorial logic, see Peter K. Marshall, ed. and trans., *Isidore, Etymologies. Book II: Rhetoric* (Paris: 1983), 9.

7 See *Liber differentiarum* (*II*), ed. María Adelaida Andrés Sanz, CCSL 111A (Turnhout: 2006), 157–58, for a justification for neglecting all manuscripts after the 10th century.

8 On an early instance of the reception of the *Synonyma*, see Claudia Di Sciacca, "Isidore of Seville in Anglo-Saxon England: The *Synonyma* as a Source of Felix's *Vita S. Guthlaci*," in Fear and Wood, *Isidore of Seville and His Reception in the Early Middle Ages*, 131–58.

9 As quoted and translated by J.N. Hillgarth, "The position of Isidorian studies: A critical review of the literature since 1935," in Díaz y Díaz, *Isidoriana*, 60.

10 Jacques Verger, "Isidore de Séville dans les universités médiévales," in Fontaine and Pellistrandi, *L'Europe héritière de l'Espagne wisigothique*, 259.

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edited by Jacques Elfassi and Bernard Ribémont on the reception of Isidore in the 12th through 15th centuries. This present chapter is indebted to the work of those scholars.[11]

To trace thoroughly the influence of Isidore's writings, or even of just his *Etymologiae*, in the second half of the Middle Ages would fill a large monograph, as Arno Borst has done in tracing the influence of Pliny's *Natural History*,[12] and this cannot be accomplished in a single essay. Considering the limits of space, I will examine here only Isidore's most popular works (divided below between the *Etymologiae* and the most important theological texts) and the modes by which those works were variously received, honored, disputed, and reshaped in the 11th through 15th centuries in Western Europe, particularly in scholastic contexts.[13] These modes include not only the direct copying of all or portions of his writings, but also the translation, versification, enlargement, or other forms of modification performed by scholastic readers upon Isidore's works, who recast his texts in new forms, and employed or confronted his ideas in scholastic disputation. In most of these cases we will find that all of the individual data in Isidore's works remained valuable to the end of the Middle Ages and beyond, but that his Augustinian, etymological mindset (in which knowing the name of a thing was equivalent to knowing the thing itself) was surpassed and subsumed by the newer Aristotelian, natural-philosophical approaches of the 13th century and beyond. That is, the Isidorian parts survived, but less often the Isidorian whole. This is demonstrated by a shift in attitude toward Isidore in the scholastic age, typified by a willingness to dispute his claims while nonetheless respecting his position as a Church Father, along with a tendency to quote from or dismantle his works, taking them out of their original contexts. To be sure, this method of reading Isidore—by adapting passages of his works in new contexts and for new audiences—was hardly novel, as Isidore himself and his contemporaries carefully edited and revised passages from their own favorite ancient authors, such as Pliny and Varro.[14]

11 Jacques Elfassi and Bernard Ribémont, eds., *La réception d'Isidore de Séville durant le Moyen Âge tardif (XIIe–XVe s.)* [= *Cahiers de recherches médiévales et humanistes* 16 (2008)]. See also Elfassi's insightful chapter in the present volume on the composition and structure of the *Etymologiae*.

12 Arno Borst, *Das Buch der Naturgeschichte. Plinius und seine Leser im Zeitalter des Pergaments*, 2nd ed. (Heidelberg: 1995)

13 I will exclude, for the most part, the influence of Isidore in the Iberian Peninsula, a subject covered by Jeremy Lawrance's chapter in the present volume.

14 On Isidore's methods of quotation, revision, and composition in the *Etymologiae* and *De natura rerum*, see the essays in Fear and Wood, *Isidore of Seville and his Reception in the Early Middle Ages*, esp. Mary Beagan, "Variations on a Theme: Isidore and Pliny on Human and Human-Instigated Anomaly," 57–74, and Andrew Fear, "Putting the Pieces Back Together: Isidore and De Natura Rerum," 75–92.

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In the sections that follow I make frequent reference to specific manuscripts and collections containing works by Isidore. I make no claims to comprehensiveness in these references, but rather use them to indicate typical patterns of the diffusion of Isidorian texts in libraries throughout western Europe.

2 Reading and Copying the *Etymologiae*

When we say "Isidore," we very often mean "Isidore's *Etymologiae*," so monumental was the influence of this work in the development both of the encyclopedia genre and of grammatical modes of thinking that persisted for the rest of the Middle Ages. Medieval scribes and authors shared this identification of Isidore with his most famous work: scholastic theologians and encyclopedists could refer to a book in *Isidorus* and assume their readers knew that the *Etymologiae* were meant. Isidore was among the primary authorities for teaching medieval scholars how to compile and summarize knowledge, along with Pliny, Boethius, Cassiodorus, and, later, Aristotle in Latin translation. Isidore's *Etymologiae*, as edited for publication by his assistant Braulio, offered "a long-influential model for information management"[15] by summarizing the ideas of hundreds of past, and often lost, authors in topical order, an order clearly indicated by a table of contents and running headers. Lists of headings or titles in a book were rare in the early Middle Ages and became common only by the 13th century, as seen in Vincent of Beauvais's monumental table of contents to his *Speculum maius*.[16] Later encyclopedists often could do little more than rephrase the *Etymologiae*, or copy from it wholesale, as was the case in sections of Hrabanus Maurus's *De naturis rerum*, Alexander Neckam's *De naturis rerum libri duo*, and Thomas of Cantimpré's *De natura rerum*. Isidore likewise was a favorite example of a *compilator*, who gathered together the "flowers" of numerous authorities but claimed responsibility more for the presentation than the contents. Not surprisingly, Isidore features prominently in many of the *florilegia* compiled by students and masters of the growing universities in the 13th century.[17]

Ownership of the *Etymologiae* was expected of any worthwhile library after the Carolingian period. Alongside the *Etymologiae* Michael Twomey places the *De proprietatibus rerum* of Bartholomew the Englishman, the *De natura rerum*

15 Ann M. Blair, *Too Much to Know. Managing Scholarly Information before the Modern Age* (New Haven: 2010), 34.

16 Blair, *Too Much to Know*, 135.

17 Blair, *Too Much to Know*, 175.

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of Hrabanus Maurus, and the *Imago mundi* of Honorius Augustodunensis as the four standard encyclopedias to be found in any well-stocked library of the later Middle Ages.[18] The surviving corpus of *Etymologiae* manuscripts after the 11th century quickly puts the lie to claims that Isidore was forgotten in the later Middle Ages. In 1965 José María Fernández Catón published, from the notes of the Isidorian scholar August Anspach, a checklist of over one thousand manuscripts of the *Etymologiae*.[19] On the basis of this checklist, Baudouin Van den Abeele made a sketch of the manuscript transmission of the *Etymologiae* in the later Middle Ages. He demonstrates that the *Etymologiae* continued to be copied in the 12th through 15th centuries at the same rate as in earlier centuries, and that the work was not eclipsed by the new encyclopedias of the 13th century, at least in terms of numbers, if not authority. He counted a total of 455 complete or significant (two or more complete books) copies of the *Etymologiae*, and 626 of substantial excerpts. Most of those "complete" copies (365) date from the 11th through 15th centuries, and many (355) of the extracts also date from that period (though Van den Abeele marks a dramatic peak of extracts in the 9th century, 136, suggesting a vibrant Carolingian interest in the work).[20]

Historians studying encyclopedias have necessarily focused on the overwhelming influence of Isidore, and many have gone so far as to define various medieval encyclopedias according to how "Isidorian" they are. Bernard Ribémont, one of the foremost authorities on medieval encyclopedism, systematically divides the history of encyclopedias into periods of "isidorisme" and "post-isidorisme," with Alexander Neckam's *De naturis rerum* riding the cusp between those two definitive eras.[21] Christel Meier has constructed a similar binary for the study of medieval encyclopedias, dividing them by mode of

18 Michael W. Twomey, "Inventing the Encyclopedia," in *Schooling and Society: The Ordering and Reordering of Knowledge in the Western Middle Ages*, eds. Alisdair A. MacDonald and Michael W. Twomey (Leuven: 2004), 80–81.

19 J.M. Fernández Caton, *Las Etimologias en la tradición manuscrita medieval estudiada por el Prof. Dr Anspach* (León: 1966). Fernández Caton provides 967 numbered manuscripts, but some are subdivided by letters *a*, *b*, and so on, so the total is rather 1080 manuscripts, according to the count of Baudouin Van den Abeele, "La tradition manuscrite des *Etymologies* d'Isidore de Séville: pour une reprise en main du dossier," *Cahiers de recherches médiévales et humanistes* 16 (2008), 198.

20 Van den Abeele, "La tradition manuscrite des *Etymologies*," 199–201.

21 This idea appears in many of Bernard Ribémont's works, but it is at the heart of his *La renaissance du XIIe siècle et l'encyclopédisme* (Paris: 2002). On Alexander Neckam as a transitional figure between two intellectual eras, see Winston Black, "Neckam, Alexander," in *The Encyclopedia of Medieval Literature in Britain*, eds. Siân Echard and Robert Rouse (Hoboken: 2017), 1411–13.

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organization, that is, according to the *ordo artium* (arranged by the Roman liberal arts) or the *ordo rerum* (based on the hierarchy of things in the created world). The most successful encyclopedias, including the *Etymologiae* itself and Vincent of Beauvais's *Speculum maius*, share aspects of each *ordo*.[22]

These attempts at artificially demarcating the development of encyclopedias go too far in relegating Isidore to the early medieval past. He was not forgotten at all in the scholastic period, but was simply found wanting in certain areas that were of greater importance in the 12th and 13th centuries than in the 7th. For example, readers of the scholastic age objected to Isidore's sparing quotation of Pliny's *Historia Naturalis*, and all of the major scholastic encyclopedists made much fuller use of that text.[23] For example, Rome, Biblioteca Vallicelliana A 18 is a 12th-century manuscript of the *Etymologiae* to which the scribe or readers added over 100 scholia taken from Pliny.[24]

High medieval encyclopedias, in comparison to the *Etymologiae*, became (paradoxically, from the modern perspective) both more scientific and more religious. On the one hand, the combination of Isidorian etymology, Plinian natural history, and (after about 1200) Aristotelian natural philosophy became a definitive aspect of most later medieval encyclopedias. On the other hand, Isidorian etymologies were "moralized" or "clericalized" as early as the 8th century in the commentary on the Apocalypse by Beatus of Liébana and in the 9th-century *De natura rerum* of Hrabanus Maurus. This trend continued into the scholastic era with Alexander Neckam's *De naturis rerum*, in which his encyclopedic catalogue of the natures of things (ostensibly a commentary on Ecclesiastes, but really much more) is an extension of biblical exegesis, Christian morals, and ethics.[25] That is not to say that Isidore did not see God's presence everywhere,[26] but it took a scholastic mindset to see a systematic,

22 Christel Meier, "Organisation of Knowledge and the Encylopaedic *ordo*: Functions and Purposes of a Universal Literary Genre," in *Pre-Modern Encyclopaedic Texts. Proceedings of the Second COMERS Congress, Groningen, 1–4 July 1996*, ed. Peter Binkley (Leiden: 1997), 103–26.

23 Mary Franklin-Brown, *Reading the World. Encyclopedic Writing in the Scholastic Age* (Chicago: 2012), 50

24 Wallace M. Lindsay, "New evidence from the text of Festus," *Classical Quarterly* 10 (1916), 106–15; J. Whatmough, "Scholia in Isidori Etymologias Vallicelliana," *ALMA* 2 (1925), 57–75, 134–69; Michael D. Reeve, "Excerpts from Pliny's *Natural History*," in *Ways of Approaching Knowledge in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages: Schools and Scholarship*, eds. Paulo Farmhouse Alberto and David Paniagua (Nordhausen: 2012), 262.

25 Tomás Záhora, *Nature, Virtue, and the Boundaries of Encyclopedic Knowledge: The Tropological Universe of Alexander Neckam (1157–1217)* (Turnhout: 2014), 8.

26 This is a fact demonstrated by Thomas O'Loughlin's chapter in this volume on Isidore as a theologian and Fear, "Putting the Pieces Back Together."

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one-for-one equivalence between every object or nature and a spiritual or biblical significance: such a reading is evident in the thousands of glosses to Bartholomew the Englishman's *De proprietatibus rerum*, in which a natural phenomenon (for example, the heat of blood in book 4 or the bitterness of large cucumbers in book 17) is made to signify (respectively) Christ's passion and original sin.

3 Excerpting the *Etymologiae*

The *Etymologiae* were excerpted from an early date, providing single books, or parts of books as needed in new compilations: Leiden, Bibliotheek der Rijksuniversiteit, BPL 114 (9th century), formerly of Reims Cathedral, starts with just *Etymologiae* book 9, 5–6;[27] and a compilation on grammar, Leiden, BPL 122 (10th century), includes numerous excerpts of *Etymologiae* book 1.[28] Such grammatical collections were still common in the scholastic age, as in the 13th-century textbook Leiden, BPL 120, a copy of Papias's *Vocabularium abbreviatum*, which is both prefaced and concluded by excerpts from the *Etymologiae*.[29] It seems that almost any time a blank folio was available, scribes and owners jotted down relevant notes from *Etymologiae*, as in the first folio of Leiden, BPL 30 (1153), before a historical compilation from Eusebius, Prosper of Aquitaine, and Sigebert of Gembloux,[30] or on the first two folios of Leiden, BPL 89 (1352), where the scribe added military vocabulary from Isidore before a copy of Justin's *Epitome* of Pompeius Trogus.[31]

Single etymologies had a life of their own, wandering in and out of biblical commentaries, scientific treatises, and florilegia. They are rarely cited as coming from Isidore (this may have been assumed), as is the case with Isidore's etymology of *fingere* (*Etymologiae* 20.4.2), copied on the flyleaf of a southern French or Spanish manuscript of the early 13th century (Yale University, Beinecke Library, Marston 266), along with two biblical passages;[32] or when Isidorian etymologies are a source of *exempla* on the virtues and vices, as in Yale University, Beinecke Library, Marston 80, a northern Italian compilation

27 *Biblioteca Universitatis Leidensis. Codices Manuscripti*, vol. 3, eds. P. Voorheve and K.A. de Meyier (Leiden: 1912), 57.

28 *Biblioteca Universitatis Leidensis. Codices Manuscripti*, vol. 3, 63.

29 *Biblioteca Universitatis Leidensis. Codices Manuscripti*, vol. 3, 61.

30 *Biblioteca Universitatis Leidensis. Codices Manuscripti*, vol. 3, 18.

31 *Biblioteca Universitatis Leidensis. Codices Manuscripti*, vol. 3, 46–47.

32 Barbara A. Shailor, *Catalogue of Medieval and Renaissance Manuscripts in the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library Yale University*, vol. 3 (Binghamton: 1992), 521.

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from the early 15th century;[33] or as a standard source of glosses in a Bible, like Yale University, Beinecke Library 455, an English Bible from the second quarter of the 13th century.[34]

Larger sections and individual books of the *Etymologiae* were easily separated and inserted with other texts, a process already begun soon after Isidore's death. This appears to have been particularly true of those fields of knowledge that were technical and cumulative in nature, as in treatises on animals, stones, or plants. Such excerpts can be seen in Oxford University, Bodleian Library, Digby 13, a 12th- and 13th-century collection of lapidaries and herbals made for Christ Church, Canterbury, which includes portions of book 16 of the *Etymologiae* as a separate treatise on gems,[35] and in a 12th-century German medical collection (British Library, Harley 4346), in which sections of *Etymologiae* book 16, on weights and measures, are made to seem exotic and new with the title *De ponderibus Almansoris et Serapionis* ("On Weights by Almansor and Serapion").[36] In a more dramatic case of excerpting Isidore, a 13th-century papal secretary, Aegidius Beneventanus, produced a florilegium in the second half of the 13th century (Yale University, Beinecke Library, Marston 119) that contained excerpts from numerous works on matters moral, historical, genealogical, and geographical. From Isidore come a bestiary extracted from *Etymologiae* book 12 and a discussion of great philosophers and poets from *Etymologiae* books 2 and 8.[37] This latter section demonstrates close reading on the part of the compiler, who drew passages from two separate books of *Etymologiae* to create a brief treatise on his topic.

The copying of single books for the *Etymologiae* was so common, in fact, that the designer of the latest *stemma codicum* for the *Etymologiae*, M. Reydellet, proposed that each book needs to be analysed and edited separately. This proposal has been followed by the current editors of the *Etymologiae* for Paris Société d'Édition *Les Belles Lettres*.[38] For example, book 4 of the *Etymologiae*,

33 Shailor, *Catalogue*, 3:153.

34 Barbara A. Shailor, *Catalogue of Medieval and Renaissance Manuscripts in the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library Yale University*, vol. 2 (Binghamton: 1992), 405–08.

35 William D. Macray, *Catalogi codicum manuscriptorum Bibliothecae Bodleianae, pars nona* (Oxford: 1883), 10. For more on this manuscript, see Henry of Huntingdon, *Anglicanus Ortus: A Verse Herbal of the Twelfth Century*, ed. and trans. Winston Black (Toronto: 2012), 62–63.

36 Described and fully digitized at http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/FullDisplay.aspx?ref=Harley_MS_4346. (accessed 14 March 2019).

37 Shailor, *Catalogue*, 3:213–16. This manuscript is fully digitized at https://brbl-dl.library.yale.edu/vufind/Record/3432886 (accessed 19 March 2019).

38 Reydellet, "La diffusion des *Origines*."

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on medicine, frequently circulated on its own as a medical authority alongside later medieval translations of Galen, Aristotle, and Arabic medical scholars.[39] While the authority of Isidore's book on medicine persisted through the scholastic age, the actual contents also saw some change. Numerous manuscripts of the *Etymologiae* in the 11th through 14th centuries contain a series of additions to book 4, which enlarge Isidore's history of the founders of medicine and provide significantly more technical details, typical of scholastic medicine, on the four humors, four elements, four parts of the body, and the anatomy of the brain. Much of this material is attributed to a Jewish scholar known as Asaph.[40]

4 The *Etymologiae* and New Encyclopedias

The 12th century was a golden age for the *Etymologiae*, at which time it was widely copied, both in full and in excerpts. Twelfth-century manuscripts of the *Etymologiae* abound, often copied with Isidore's *De natura rerum*; they were treated as a complementary pair that offered a thorough introduction to an understanding of God, man, and nature.[41] Masters and students active in Paris, Chartres, Orléans, and elsewhere—hungry for knowledge about nature before

39 For example, Nürnberg, Stadtbibliothek, Cent. v, 47 (1468–1477: Nürnberg), a medical and natural philosophical compendium featuring Galen and commentaries on Aristotle's natural texts, with Isidore, *Etymologiae* book 4, in between on fols 75–81, Ingeborg Neske, *Die Handschriften der Stadtbibliothek Nürnberg. Band IV: Die Lateinischen Mittelalterlichen Handschriften. Varia: 13.-15. und 16.-18. Jh.* (Wiesbaden: 1997), 76; and in a set of Gaelic medical treatises from the 15th or 16th century in Manchester, John Rylands University Library, Irish 35, fols 68–71, in which Latin lines from *Etymologiae* book 4 introduce lengthier passages on medicine in Gaelic, Ker, *Medieval Manuscripts in British Libraries*, 3:456–458.

40 Carmen Codoñer Merino, "La medicina en lagunos manuscritos de Isidoro de Sevilla," in *Isidorus Medicus. Isidoro de Sevilla y los textos de medicina*, ed. A. Ferraces Rodriguez (A Coruña: 2005), 65–84. The additions are discussed further and edited in Carmen Codoñer Merino, "Textes médicaux insérés dans les *Etymologies* isidoriennes," *Cahiers de recherches médiévales et humanistes* 16 (2008), 17–37.

41 To name just a few examples, copies of the pair were made in the West Rhineland in 1136 (now British Library, Harley 2660, described and digitized online: http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/FullDisplay.aspx?ref=Harley_MS_2660 [accessed 19 March 2019]) at the Cistercian monastery of Salem at the end of the 12th century (University of Heidelberg, Cod. Sal. IX 39), with extracts from Bede and Pseudo-Hrabanus, Wilfried Werner, *Die mittelalterlichen nichtliturgischen Handschriften des Zisterzienserklosters Salem* (Wiesbaden: 2000), 247–48; and another early 12th-century copy, most likely German, is now Leiden, Periz F. 2, *Biblioteca Universitatis Leidensis. Codices Manuscripti IV. Codices Perizoniani* (Leiden: 1946), 1–2.

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the influx of Aristotelian translations at the end of the century—continued to turn to these Isidorian works, together with the compendia of Pliny, Macrobius, and Martianus Capella.[42]

The *Etymologiae* remained a favorite source of natural knowledge in the later Middle Ages, but Isidore's *De natura rerum* did not share such popularity. This is suggested by a survey of manuscripts of *De natura rerum* in the Bibliothèque nationale in Paris, where only three of the dozen manuscripts held there date from after the 12th century.[43] It was typical of 12th-century philosophers to compose new works about nature, like Adelard of Bath's *Quaestiones naturales* or William of Conches's *Philosophia* and *Dragmaticon philosophiae*, which by the 13th century often supplanted the *De natura rerum* of Isidore and Bede's work of the same name as the best introduction to cosmology and physics, while still relying heavily on their early medieval ideas.[44]

The *Etymologiae* taught high medieval scholars about the nature of things, but it was obviously also a book about words. To that extent, the authors of new lexicons (proto-dictionaries) necessarily built on Isidore's model and wordlists in the *Etymologiae* and *Differentiae*:[45] Papias's *Elementarium Doctrinae Rudimentum* (or *Vocabularium*, finished by 1053) is an alphabetical redaction of the *Etymologiae*; Osbern of Gloucester used both Isidore and Papias in his mid-12th-century *Panormia*, as did Huguccio of Pisa, writing his *Liber Derivationum* in the later 12th century.[46] Alexander Neckam (whose encyclopedia I examine below) also compiled his *De nominibus utensilium* from Isidore's

42 Ribémont, *La renaissance du XIIe siècle et l'encyclopédisme*, 86.

43 Jacques Elfassi and Bernard Ribémont. "La réception d'Isidore de Séville durant le Moyen Âge tardif (XIIe–XVe s.)," *Cahiers de recherches médiévales et humanistes* 16 (2008), 3. The most complete inventory of manuscripts of the *De natura rerum* is in Calvin B. Kendall and Faith Wallis, *Isidore of Seville, On the nature of things* (Liverpool: 2016), 66–97, but see also the review of this book by Jacques Elfassi in *Bryn Mawr Classical Review*, March 2017, n. 22: http://bmcr.brynmawr.edu/2017/2017-03-22.html (accessed 19 March 2019), who adds six more manuscripts. My thanks to Dr Elfassi for providing this reference.

44 Barbara Obrist, "Guillaume de Conches: Cosmologie, physique du ciel et astronomie," in *Guillaume de Conches: Philosophie et science au XIIe siècle*, eds. Barbara Obrist and Irene Caiazzo (Florence: 2011), 130, 136–37, n. 37, 159.

45 Specifically, Papias used Isidore's description of the cardinal virtues from his *Differentiae*: István Bejczy, *The Cardinal Virtues in the Middle Ages: A Study in Moral Thought from the Fourth to the Fourteenth Century* (Leiden: 2011), 64.

46 Uguccione da Pisa, *Derivationes*, eds. Enzo Cecchini, Guido Arbizzoni, Settimio Lanciotti, Giorgio Nonni, Maria Grazia Sassi, and Alba Tontini (Florence: 2004). This not-quite-critical edition does not have an *apparatus fontium*, and it is not clear how much of the work comes directly from Isidore or through intermediaries. See Wolfgang P. Mueller's review of: Enzo Cecchini et al., eds., *Uguccione da Pisa, Derivationes: Edizione critica princeps*, in *Speculum* 81 (2006), 932–33.

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Etymologiae with additional information from more recent lexicons, like the *Phale totum* of his own master Adam de Petit-Pont and Osbern's *Panormia*.[47] Even well into the 13th century new dictionaries made extensive use of Isidorian etymologies, such as Guillelmus Brito's *Summa* (*c*.1270) and Giovanni Balbi's *Catholicon* (1286).[48]

Between 1090 and 1120 Lambert of St Omer composed his *Liber Floridus*, often considered the first of a new generation of encyclopedias in the high Middle Ages, but really more of a well-organized *florilegium*, as indicated by its name. Lambert drew extensively from Isidore's *Etymologiae*, and a scribe of a later copy of the *Liber Floridus* (Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, lat. 8865, *c*.1250–1270),[49] made in Cambrai and apparently a direct copy of Lambert's autograph manuscript (now University of Ghent 92), made further additions from Isidore: a lapidary extracted from *Etymologiae* book 16 that is paired with Marbod of Rennes's *De virtutibus XII lapidum nobilium*, a bestiary composed of extracts from *Etymologiae* book 12, and an abbreviation of Isidore's *De fide catholica contra Judaeos*. Honorius Augustodunensis (probably an Englishman and not from Autun, as his name suggests) was perhaps the greatest encyclopedist of the 12th century. His encyclopedia *Imago mundi* is most similar to Bede's *De natura rerum* in its organization, but it is liberally supplemented by material from Isidore's *Etymologiae* and Pliny's *Natural History*.[50] Gossuin of Metz translated and expanded this work as *L'image du monde* in the mid-13th century, providing a pathway for Isidore into vernacular literature. Hugh of Saint-Victor makes many references to Isidore in the *Didascalicon* (*c*.1125), an introduction to a Christian education, and some have argued that Isidore was the main inspiration for this popular work.[51] Hugh also used Isidore's *De ecclesiasticis officiis* in his own *De sacramentis*.

Isidore's material on animals was useful in the compilation of bestiaries, which were particularly popular in the 12th century and incorporated into the encyclopedias of the 13th. A pair of bestiaries made in England around 1200 (now New York, Pierpont Morgan Library 81, and London, British Library, Royal 12 C XIX) feature passages on animals taken from the *Etymologiae*, the book of Genesis, and the *Imago mundi* of Honorius, along with sermons and medical

47 R.W. Hunt, *The Schools and the Cloister*, ed. and rev. Margaret Gibson (Oxford: 1984), 33–34.

48 Stephen A. Barney, W.J. Lewis, J.A. Beach, Oliver Berghof, *The Etymologies of Isidore of Seville* (Cambridge: 2006), 25.

49 Jacqueline Sclafer, Marie-Pierre Laffitte, Françoise Bléchet, Marie-Françoise Damongeot, Mathieu Lescuyer, and Marie-Hélène Tesnière, *Catalogue général des manuscrits latins nos. 8823–8921* (Paris: 1997), 57–68.

50 Ribémont, *La renaissance du XIIe siècle et l'encyclopédisme*, 82–99.

51 Hillgarth, "The position of isidorian studies," 67.

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recipes.[52] This pairing of Isidore with a later author in the compilation of a bestiary is also seen in Tübingen, Universitätsbibliothek Mc 365, a 13th-century bestiary attributed to Hugh of Saint-Victor, but which is actually a compilation of bestiary material from Hugh of Fouilloy and Isidore's *Etymologiae*.[53]

Some of the most extensive research done in recent years on the influence of Isidore's *Etymologiae* concerns its impact on the composition of the so-called scholastic encyclopedias of the 13th and 14th centuries, produced by and for the scholars of the mendicant schools and new universities, the earliest of which *studia* (Bologna, Paris, and Oxford) were established by the later 12th century. The scholastic nature of the new encyclopedias is defined by the presence of Aristotelian physics and metaphysics, available in Latin translations only by the turn of the 13th century. The most important of these new encyclopedias were Alexander Neckam's *De naturis rerum*, Bartholomew the Englishman's *De proprietiatibus rerum*, Thomas of Cantimpré's *De natura rerum*, and Vincent of Beauvais's *Speculum naturale*, *Speculum doctrinale*, and *Speculum historiale* (known collectively as the *Speculum maius*). All of these encyclopedists designed their works in response to the academic programs of the new universities, founded on the combination of Roman liberal arts and Greco-Arabic philosophy.[54] Isidore was a key source not only for facts and etymologies for these 13th-century encyclopedists, but also for their very patterns and structures for compiling knowledge; for example, Hildegard of Bingen (already in the 12th century), Alexander Neckam, and Vincent of Beauvais followed Isidore's pattern of discussing the creatures of God according to their appearance in the Creation story of Genesis.[55]

While I wish to challenge the common belief that Isidore was abandoned in the scholastic era, there can be no denying that the encyclopedists of the 13th century broke, for the most part, with the Isidorian etymological tradition by undertaking a reorganization of knowledge according to new principles of

52 *Two East Anglian Picture Books: A Facsimile of the Helmingham Herbal and Bestiary and Bodleian Ms. Ashmole 1504*, ed. Nicholas Barker (London: 1988), 5. The British Library manuscript is fully digitized online: http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/FullDisplay.aspx?ref=Royal_MS_12_c_xix (accessed 19 March 2019).

53 Gerd Brinkhus and Arno Mentzel-Reuters, *Handschriftenkataloge der Universitätsbilbiothek Tübingen*, 2 vols (Wiesbaden: 2001), 2:245–46.

54 See, for example, Michelangelo Picone, "Il significato di un convegno sull'enciclopedismo medievale," in *L'enciclopedismo medievale: Atti del convegno "L'enciclopedismo medievale," San Gimignano 8–10 ottobre 1992*, ed. M. Picone (Ravenna: 1994), 15–21.

55 Laurence Moulinier, "Une encyclopédiste sans précédent? Le cas de Hildegarde de Bingen," in Picone, *L'enciclopedismo medievale*, 122. See also Eva Albrecht, "The Organization of Vincent of Beauvais' *Speculum Maius* and of some other Latin Encyclopedias," in *The Medieval Hebrew Encyclopedias of Science and Philosophy. Proceedings of the Bar-Ilan University Conference*, ed. Steven Harvey (Dordrecht: 2000), 46–74.

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classification learned from Aristotle, Galen, and their Arabic commentators. Bernard Ribémont, Tomás Záhora, and others have recognized especially in Neckam's *De naturis rerum* "two major shifts in medieval encyclopaedism: the move away from the tradition of Isidore of Seville's *Etymologiae*, and the acquisition of [an] Aristotelian understanding of nature."[56] This did not mean abandoning Isidore outright, and it is clear that the scholastic encyclopedists were reading both Isidore and Aristotle and exploring new ways to balance two profoundly different approaches to knowledge. For example, Vincent of Beauvais carefully distinguishes between Isidore the Church Father, who was to be followed closely in matters of faith, and Isidore the encyclopedist of the natures of things, with whom he was free to dispute. When Isidore says that snake venom is cold, and Avicenna says that it is hot, neither has greater authority and we are encouraged to judge for ourselves.[57] Despite this *caveat* Vincent, in his *Speculum naturale* and *Speculum doctrinale*, quotes from every one of the *Etymologiae*'s twenty books but one (the dictionary of book 10), and in ten cases Vincent used at least half of each book.[58]

Among the later and lesser-known encyclopedists can also be observed extremes in their use of Isidore, from strictly adhering to the *Etymologiae* to almost completely ignoring the work. In the first case, Engelbert, abbot of Admont (*c*.1250–1331), wrote his *Tractatus de naturis animalium* based closely on book 12 of the *Etymologiae*, with little recourse to the numerous encyclopedias of the 13th century. He is rare in his devotion to Isidore, which is all the more curious given that Engelbert is known for being a student of Aristotelian philosophy in Padua and is credited with introducing Aristotle's works to the Austrian region of the Holy Roman Empire.[59] At the other extreme, Arnaldus Saxo, in his mid-13th-century encyclopedia *Liber de floribus rerum naturalium*, does not cite Isidore a single time, and Albertus Magnus uses Isidore in his *De mineralibus* only in the rare cases when there is no other authority, more ancient or more recent, available.[60] While we should acknowledge these extremes, most

56 Záhora, *Nature, Virtue, and the Boundaries of Encyclopedic Knowledge*, 45–46, challenges Ribémont's claims that Neckam actually assimilated and understood Aristotelian science, and notes the lack of any real integration of Isidorian and Aristotelian material.

57 Monique Paulmier-Foucart, "Les Étymologies d'Isidore de Séville dans le *Speculum maius* de Vincent de Beauvais," in Fontaine and Pellistrandi, *L'Europe héritière de l'Espagne wisigothique*, 270.

58 Paulmier-Foucart, "Les Étymologies d'Isidore de Séville dans le *Speculum maius*," 275–76.

59 Max Schmitz, "Dans le sillage d'Isidore de Séville: Le *Tractatus de naturis animalium* d'Engelbert d'Admont (ca. 1250–1331)," *Cahiers de recherches médiévales et humanistes* 16 (2008), 175–94.

60 Isabelle Draelants, "Encyclopédies et lapidaires médiévaux: durable autorité d'Isidore de Séville et de ses *Etymologies*," *Cahiers de recherches médiévales et humanistes* 16 (2008), 39–91.

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encyclopedists of the 13th, and even 14th, centuries were still obliged to use (or pay lip service to) the traditional encyclopedic authors like Isidore and Pliny.[61] For example, Henry of Herford, the 14th-century compiler of the encyclopedic *Catena aurea entium* followed primarily Albertus Magnus for the structure and composition of his questions about nature, but he used a variety of ancient and more recent texts (Pliny, Isidore, the Pseudo-Aristotelian *Problemata*, and Thomas of Cantimpré) for detailed examples in his answers.[62]

5 Bartholomew the Englishman and Isidore of Seville

After the *Etymologiae*, perhaps the most popular encyclopedia of the entire Middle Ages was the *De proprietatibus rerum* of Bartholomew the Englishman, which I will use as a single, focused example of how a scholastic encyclopedist read and used Isidore.[63] Surviving in over two hundred manuscripts, *De proprietatibus rerum* was written to educate Franciscan friars and prepare them for a career in preaching, but it found use and popularity in libraries of all sorts across Europe. Bartholomew compiled his text from a wide variety of sources, encyclopedic and more strictly philosophical. Among his favorite ancient sources were Pliny and Isidore, whom he tended to use as sources of data for illustrating the philosophical arguments found in more recent texts of Greek and Arabic extraction. Much of the material in *De proprietatibus rerum* can be divided by an Isidorian-Aristotelian binary, as R. James Long observed in his study of Bartholomew's books 3 and 4: "this division [between etymologies and natural properties] reflects the author's conviction that we experience the world not only in itself but also by means of the words we employ to describe it."[64] In this respect, Bartholomew is still greatly indebted to Isidore, while

61 Iolanda Ventura, "On philosophical encyclopaedism in the fourteenth century: The *Catena aurea entium* of Henry of Herford," in *Une lumière venue d'ailleurs: Héritages et ouvertures dans les encyclopédies d'Orient et d'Occident au Moyen Age. Actes du colloque de Louvain-la-Neuve, 19–21 mai 2005*, eds. G. de Callataÿ and B. Van den Abeele (Turnhout: 2008), 228.

62 Ventura, "On philosophical encyclopaedism," 213, 234, 237.

63 *De proprietatibus rerum* is currently being edited for Brepols's series *De diversis artibus*. Two volumes have been published: Bartholomaeus Anglicus, *De proprietatibus rerum*, vol. 1 [books 1–4], eds. Baudouin Van den Abeele, Heinz Meyer, Michael W. Twomey, Bernd Roling, and R. James Long (Turnhout: 2007); *De proprietatibus rerum*, vol. 6: Liber XVII, ed. Iolanda Ventura (Turnhout: 2007). Until the entire series is completed the preferred edition is still *Bartholomaei Anglici De Genuinis rerum coelestium, terrestrium et inferarum proprietatibus libri XVIII …* (1601; repr. Frankfurt: 1964).

64 R. James Long, "Introduction" to book 3, in Bartholomaeus Anglicus, *De proprietatibus rerum*, vol. 1 (eds Van den Abeele et al.), 137.

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nonetheless informed by Greek medicine and physics as learned through Constantine the African's *Pantegni* and Latin translations of Aristotle's *De anima*, *De generatione animalium*, and *De partibus animalium*.

Bartholomew's first book presents a brief discussion of the nature of God, restating in orthodox fashion much of the opening doctrinal statement of the Fourth Lateran Council in 1215, before drawing on a wide range of theologians, from ancients like Augustine and Johannes Damascenus to recent authorities like Praepositinus of Cremona Peter Lombard, and Alexander of Hales. But whenever names are concerned, Bartholomew almost invariably turns to Isidore: the meaning of *Trinitas* (DPR 1, xiv, 16–22), the Hebrew names for God (DPR 1, 19, 3–33), and the various descriptors for Christ (DPR 1, 21, 7–35), such as *digitus*, *columba*, *nubes* (DPR 1, 21, 60–69).[65] In each of these cases Isidore is introduced by name, with the specific book and sometimes the title of the *Etymologiae*: *e.g. ut dicit Isidorus libro* VI *Etymologiarum*, or *sicut patet in Isidoro libro* VII. This pattern is repeated by Jean Corbechon in his 1372 French translation of Bartholomew's encyclopaedia, *Livre des proprietez de choses*: "sicomme dit Ysidoire … sicomme dit Ysidoire au .xvii^{e}. livre."[66]

Just as Bartholomew deftly wove quotes from Isidore together with more recent theological and canonical documents in his book 1, so also in his book 17, on plants and herbs, did he combine Isidorian etymologies with Aristotelian and Salernitan scientific and medical texts. Iolanda Ventura observes that Bartholomew employed books 3, 17, 19, and 20 of the *Etymologiae* in the composition of this book.[67] A typical pattern for Bartholomew in book 17, as can be seen in his passages on balm and cinnamon, is to use Isidore for the technical core of his passage, Pseudo-Aristotle's *De vegetabilibus* to help "modernize" that material, and Pliny for fabulous tales about the plants in question.[68] In two of his chapters on trees, Bartholomew paraphrased or quoted from the Pseudo-Aristotelian *De vegetabilibus* and from several glosses to the *De vegetabilibus* (all recent texts in the Latin schools). Though this paraphrase of "Aristotle" continues for nearly thirty pages in the modern edition, Bartholomew still gave pride of place to Isidore, whose etymology of *arbor* (*Etym.* 17.6.1–2) opens the entire section.[69] The same pattern is followed with most plants and herbs in the book: an opening statement on its name and basic identity taken from

65 Bartholomaeus Anglicus, *De proprietatibus rerum*, vol. 1 (eds Van den Abeele et al.), 75, 78, 81, 82.

66 Latin and French versions quoted in Bernard Ribémont, "Une 'botanique' encyclopédique confrontée à la merveille: l'exemple du *De proprietatibus rerum*," in *De natura rerum. Études sur les encyclopédies médiévales* (Orléans: 1995), 201–03.

67 Bartholomaeus Anglicus, *De proprietatibus rerum*, vol. 6 (ed. Ventura), xvii.

68 Ribémont, "Une 'botanique' encyclopédique," 190–96; Bartholomaeus Anglicus, *De proprietatibus rerum*, vol. 6 (ed. Ventura), xx.

69 Bartholomaeus Anglicus, *De proprietatibus rerum*, vol. 6 (ed. Ventura), 3.

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Isidore, followed by a much lengthier section on its medicinal attributes drawn from the medical and botanical texts current in the high medieval curriculum, usually Pseudo-Aristotelian works; herbals such as *Circa instans*, *De viribus herbarum* of Macer Floridus, *Dioscorides alphabeticus*; and medical works of Constantinus Africanus and Isaac Israeli. Isidore was not forgotten, but he was hardly sufficient in the age of scholastic medicine, informed by Aristotelian philosophy, new pharmaceuticals imported from Asia, and new translations from Greek and Arabic medical works. Isidorian etymologies served for Bartholomew not so much as the encyclopedic material that his readers were seeking, but as an extended part of the title to each chapter. That is, etymology is no longer the explanation of a thing, but an introduction to the thing.

Despite all of these claims that Bartholomew "uses" Isidore's *Etymologiae*, he usually does not quote the work verbatim. It is worth looking at one example of Bartholomew's incorporation of Isidore to track the ways in which Isidore was adapted for a scholastic and mendicant audience: the first chapter of book 2 of *De proprietiatbus rerum*, on angels, was taken entirely from the *Etymologiae*. I provide below on the left Bartholomew's introductory passage on angels, with his Isidorian source on the right.

De proprietatibus rerum **2.1.1–12. De interpretatione angeli (ed. Roling, 2007, 105)**	*Etymologiae* **7.5.1–13. De angelis (ed. Lindsay, 1911)**
Angelus itaque grece, hebraice malach, latine vero nuntius interpretatur, eo quod per angelorum ministerium divina voluntas populo nuntietur. Unde angelus nomen est officii, non nature. Spiritus autem semper est angelus, sed quando a Deo mittitur, tunc primo proprie angelus nuncupatur. Cui scilicet angelo licentia pictorum alas tribuit, in quarum subito motu celerem angelorum operationem figurative predicta pictoralis licentia simplicibus preostendit, sicut et poetas[70] ventis alas ascribere antiquitas non prohibuit, sicut dicit Isidorus libro VII, capitulo VII.	Angeli Grace vocantur, Hebraice malachoth, Latine vero nuntii interpretantur, ab eo quod Domini voluntatem populis nuntiant. Angelorum autem vocabulum officii nomen est, non naturae. Semper enim spiritus sunt, sed cum mittuntur, vocantur angeli. Quibus ideo pictorum licentia pinnas faciant, ut celerem eorum in cuncta discursum significent, sicut et iuxta fabulas poetarum venti pinnas habere dicuntur, propter velocitatem scilicet.

70 I am using *poetas* from the 1601 edition, which makes more sense than Bernd Roling's reading of *poeticis* at this point in the 2007 edition.

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Bartholomew's attribution, *sicut dicit Isidorus*, suggests to a modern reader that the whole passage is a direct quote, but a quick comparison shows differences both small and large. He replaces Isidore's plural *angeli* with the singular throughout, and he uses synonyms for other words: *nuncupatur* for Isidore's *vocantur*, *alas* for *pinnas*, and *tribuit* for *faciant*. Bartholomew also adds words and phrases, especially for implied subjects, to make his source clearer, as in *per angelorum ministerium divina voluntas populo nuntietur* for Isidore's *Domini voluntatem populis nuntiant* (where *angeli* is implied), *Spiritus autem semper est angelus* for Isidore's *Semper enim spiritus sunt* (*angeli* implied again), or *Cui scilicet angelo* for Isidore's *Quibus* (i.e. *angelis*). But towards the end of this brief paragraph, Bartholomew felt the need to rewrite his source more thoroughly. Isidore here reads, in translation, "For this reason the license of artists makes wings [*literally*, feathers] for them, to signify their swift course on all their missions, just as in poetic fiction the winds are said to have wings to indicate their speed."[71] Bartholomew changed this passage to, "The license of artists has granted him, that is, the angel, wings, for in their sudden movement the aforesaid pictorial license demonstrates for the simple the swift operation of angels in a figurative manner, just as antiquity did not forbid poets to ascribe wings to the wind."

Here Bartholomew has liberally modified Isidore's text in several ways to make the description of angels in the *Etymologiae* more accessible to his 13th-century audience: Isidore's poets are now removed another six centuries further in the past, so for Bartholomew their writings come under the authority of *antiquitas*; Isidore's vague *in cuncta* is now unpacked in terms of scholastic theology as the *angelorum operationem*; and Bartholomew takes a witty, poetic turn of his own by personifying *antiquitas* in place of Isidore's typical and arid phrase [*angeli*] *dicuntur*. The most important addition, though, is Bartholomew's explanation of angel's wings as being a *figura*, or didactic image, constructed by poets for the purpose of educating the *simplices*. This is an idea wholly missing from Isidore's passage, and is indicative of how Bartholomew modified Isidore's writings for the training of mendicant preachers, who would themselves be searching for concrete ways to express religious truths to the simple and uneducated. This shift in purpose for the imagery of wings, from mere poetic license to a heuristic tool, also can explain why Bartholomew removed Isidore's concluding phrase, *propter velocitatem scilicet*. For Bartholomew, poets did not give wings to the wind simply as a suggestion of the wind's speed, but rather they are subsumed within a universalizing Christian

71 Trans. Barney et al., *The Etymologies*, 160.

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tradition in which every worldly image is potentially, and foremost, a tool for understanding the faith.[72]

6 Isidore the Theologian in the Scholastic Age

By the high Middle Ages, Isidore's reputation was firmly cemented as a scholar of this world, of nature, of men, and of the arts. But he was also a saint, one revered particularly in his native Spain,[73] and his words were valued also in otherworldly matters. After the *Etymologiae* Isidore's two most popular works in the scholastic era were his *Sententiae* and *Synonyma*. The *Sententiae*, often called *De summo bono* in medieval manuscripts and catalogues,[74] is a compendium of concise statements, or "sentences," about moral and dogmatic theology, divided into three books covering 141 topics. Isidore was one of the founders of the genre of "sentences" in that the structure, topics, and sources he employed in constructing a manual of practical theology were widely emulated in later centuries.[75] This is especially evident during the 12th century in the teaching and writings of Anselm of Laon, Abelard, and Gilbert of Poitiers, among others, culminating with the *Sententiae* of Peter Lombard (*c.*1150–60).[76] According to Philipp Rosemann, "The arrangement of topics in [Isidore's] book I foreshadows the systematic order of later, much more advanced manuals of theology. Isidore first treats the properties of and knowability of God, as well as his eternity. … Like his *Etymologiae*, Isidore's *Sententiae* were one of the most frequently read books of the medieval period."[77] Isidore's *Sententiae* were

72 On the training of preachers in the 13th century through the use of *figurae*, see Winston Black, "Faces of the World: William of Auvergne and the Rhetoric of Penance," in *From Learning to Love: Schools, Law, and Pastoral Care in the Middle Ages*, ed. Tristan Sharp, with Isabelle Cochelin, Greti Dinkova-Bruun, Abigail Firey, and Giulio Silano (Toronto: 2017), 419–42.

73 Emma Falque, "En torno a la figura de Isidore en el s. XIII: Lucas de Tuy," *Antiquité tardive* 23 (2015), 249–60.

74 On the title of the work see Richard Sharpe, *Titulus* (Turnhout: 2003), 74, 91–93.

75 See Pierre Cazier's introduction on the genre of sentences and Isidore's organizational techniques in *Isidori Hispalensis Sententiae*, ed. Pierre Cazier, CCSL 111 (Turnhout: 1998), x–xiii, xix–xxx.

76 Marcia Colish, "The Sentence Collection and the Education of Professional Theologians in the Twelfth Century," in *The Intellectual Climate of the Early University: Essays in Honor of Otto Gründler*, ed. Nancy Van Deusen (Kalamazoo: 1997), 1–26.

77 Philipp Rosemann, *Peter Lombard* (Oxford: 2004), 17–18.

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also employed in other genres as diverse as exegetical commentaries, Gratian's *Decretum*, and the chronicle of Salimbene.[78]

Isidore's continuing authority as a theologian in the early scholastic age is evident in a theological collection, compiled in Admont during the later 11th and early 12th centuries, featuring several works of Augustine, the *Sententiae* of Abelard, and the *Sententiae* of Anselm of Laon. A contemporary scribe filled the end of a quire (fol. 82r-v) with excerpts from Isidore's *Sententiae*, calling them *Sermo sancti ysidori de angelica et h*[*umana*] *condicione*. This collection is an important example of early scholastic theology, and Isidore was considered a useful addendum, but not a central feature, to such a collection.[79] Despite being overshadowed by scholastic sentence collections, over 500 copies of Isidore's *Sententiae* survive, many from after the 12th century.[80] Some of these later copies reflect theology's move from the monastic cloister to the urban schools, as witnessed by copies surviving in Orléans: two different 12th-century copies of the *Sententiae* come from the Abbey of Fleury (Orléans 74 [71] and 187 [164]) and another 12th-century copy produced perhaps at Saint-Maur-des-Fossés in Fleury and later owned by the Abbey of Fleury itself (Orléans 150 [207]), while a later copy was produced and used in Paris by the mid-15th century and donated to the seminary of Arles (Orléans 186 [163]).[81] And then there is the 15th-century *Sententiae* copied with Dante's *Divine Comedy*, which I noted at the start of this essay.[82]

Isidore's main sources for his theological works were St Augustine and St Gregory, and he was placed proudly alongside these Church Fathers in later manuscripts. For example, in the first half of the 13th century Bishop Jocelyn of Wells (d. 1242) ordered made and presented to the Franciscans of Bristol a fine manuscript containing Isidore's *Sententiae* and *Synonyma*, followed by three

78 Jacques Elfassi, "Isidorus Hispalensis ep., *Sententiae*," in *La trasmissione dei testi latini del medioevo. Medieval Latin Texts and their Transmission*, vol. 1, eds. Paolo Chiesa and Lucia Castaldi (Florence: 2004), 218.

79 Princeton University Library, Garrett 169: Don C. Skemer, with Adelaide Bennett, Jean F. Preston, and William P. Stoneman, *Medieval & Renaissance Manuscripts in the Princeton University Library*, 2 vols (Princeton: 2013), 1:386.

80 L. Robles records about 500 witnesses in "Isidoro de Sevilla y la cultura eclesiástica de la España visigótica: Notas para un estudio del libro de las 'Sentencias,'" *Archivos leoneses* 47–48 (1970), 80–153, and Pierre Cazier added twenty more in his edition. On the diffusion of the text, see Elfassi, "*Sententiae*."

81 Élisabeth Pellegrin and Jean-Paul Bouhot, *Catalogue des manuscrits médiévaux de la Bibliothèque Municipale d'Orléans* (Paris: 2010), 81, 163, 226–27.

82 Manchester, John Rylands University Library, It. 49 (fols 177–226), Ker, *Medieval Manuscripts in British Libraries*, 3:461–63.

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works of Augustine.[83] Isidore could also be juxtaposed with more recent theologians. Lincoln Cathedral manuscript 203 is an early 14th-century, English copy of Hugh Ripelin's widely read *Compendium theologicae veritatis*, to which a contemporary scribe added a complete copy of Isidore's *Sententiae*. The two works make an obvious pair, as each presents a summary of theological truths.[84] The *Sententiae* were Isidore's first work in print (Nuremberg: 1470), even before the *Etymologiae* (*editio princeps* 1472).[85]

7 The Afterlife of Isidore's Shorter Religious Treatises

Less popular than the *Sententiae*, but still influential, were Isidore's exegetical treatises, *Quaestiones in Vetus Testamentum*, *Prooemia in libros ueteris ac noui testamenti*, *Allegoriae*, and *De ortu et obitu patrum*,[86] all of which (but particularly the *Quaestiones*) served as models for biblical interpretation for the rest of the Middle Ages. These Isidorian works remained in use both on their own merits and because much of Isidore's treatment of biblical signification was adopted in the 9th century by Hrabanus Maurus, and then in the 11th-century *Glossa ordinaria* to the Bible, which would be copied and later printed with many Bibles for the next five centuries.[87] Whether later medieval readers knew it or not, they were often reading Isidore's biblical commentaries when they read a glossed Bible. To give just one example, the ordinary gloss on Genesis 22, the story of Isaac, comes first from Hrabanus's *Commentariorum in genesim libri quatuor*, followed by a lengthy quote from Isidore's *Quaestiones* on Genesis.[88]

Scribes in both the Carolingian and high medieval periods recognized the similarities and utility of these exegetical texts, and frequently copied them together, especially the triad of the *Prooemia*, *Allegoriae*, and *De ortu et obitu*

83 Bristol, Public Library 3: Ker, *Medieval Manuscripts in British Libraries*, 2:202.

84 R.M. Thomson, *Catalogue of the Manuscripts of Lincoln Cathedral Chapter Library* (Cambridge: 1989), 164–65.

85 Jacques Elfassi, "*Sententiae*," 215.

86 On Hrabanus's use of Isidore, see Bill Schipper, "Rabanus Maurus and his Sources," in MacDonald and Twomey, *Schooling and Society*, 1–21.

87 Greti Dinkova-Bruun, "Biblical thematics: The story of Samson in Medieval Literary Discourse," in *The Oxford Handbook of Medieval Latin Literature*, eds. Ralph J. Hexter and David Townsend (Oxford: 2012), 358–59; Lesley Smith, *The Glossa Ordinaria: The Making of a Medieval Bible Commentary* (Leiden: 2009), 44–47.

88 Devorah Schoenfeld, *Isaac on Jewish and Christian Altars: Polemic and Exegesis in Rashi and the Glossa Ordinaria* (New York: 2013), 67–68.

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patrum. These texts were copied together, seemingly as a single unit, in manuscripts from 9th-century Orléans, 12th-century Seckau (Austria), 14th-century Padua, and 15th-century Nürnberg.[89] The last work in this triad, *De ortu et obitu patrum*, while not nearly as common in later manuscripts as Isidore's *Etymologiae* or *Sententiae*, still found its niche in vernacular literature. Brunetto Latini translated portions of it for his Old French encyclopedia *Livre dou Tresor*, *c*.1260–70.[90]

Among just a few of the high medieval exegetes who employed Isidore's glosses on the Old Testament, either directly or through intermediaries, are Bruno of Segni (*Expositio in Pentateuchum*), Richard of Saint-Victor (*Liber exceptionum*), Andrew of Saint-Victor (*Expositio super Heptateuchum*), and Peter the Chanter (*Glossae super Genesim*).[91] Later medieval exegesis, however, amounted to more than simply copying early medieval commentators. As Greti Dinkova-Bruun has demonstrated, high medieval biblical scholars, such as Alexander of Ashby and Abbot Gottfried of Admont, respected Isidore's original interpretation of biblical symbols but offered more nuanced and complex readings of certain passages. Isidore's words could also be rewritten for a new age of learning, as in the *Vetus Testamentum uersibus latinis* of Petrus Episcopus (d. 1219), where Isidore's exegesis is rendered in Latin hexameters for ease of memorization, in a "mechanical and uninspired way." By comparison, the contemporary poet Petrus Riga (d. 1209) also versified

89 Orléans, Bibliothèque municipale 313 (266), contains the *Prooemia*, *De ortu*, and *Allegoriae*, Élisabeth Pellegrin and Jean-Paul Bouhot, *Catalogue des manuscrits médiévaux de la Bibliothèque Municipale d'Orléans* (Paris: 2010), 438–39; Graz, Universitätsbibliothek 793 (12th century, from Seckau) contains the *Prooemia*, *De ortu*, *Differentiae*, and a note attributed to Isidore, *Nomina sanctorum patrum mistice exposita*, Anton Kern, *Die Handschriften der Universitätsbibliothek*, 2 vols (Vienna: 1942–56), 2:48; Padua, Seminario Vescovile, Cod. 422 (14th century), a compilation of Jerome and Pseudo-Jerome texts owned by the bishop of Padua includes Isidore's *Prooemia*, *De ortu*, and *Allegoriae*, *I Manoscritti della Biblioteca del Seminario Vescovile di Padova*, eds. Andrea Donello et al. (Florence: 1998), 78–79; and Nürnberg, Stadtbibliothek, III, 83 (15th century) contains the *Prooemia*, *De ortu*, *Allegoriae*, and *Synonyma*, Karin Schneider, *Die Handscriften der Stadtbibliothek Nürnberg. Band II: Die Lateinischen Mittelalterlichen Handschriften. Teil 1: Theologischen Handschriften* (Wiesbaden: 1967), 235–37.

90 Bernard Ribémont, "Brunetto Latini, le *Livre dou Tresor* et l'histoire sainte: une réception du *De ortu et obitu patrum* d'Isidore de Séville," *Cahiers de recherches médiévales et humanistes* 16 (2008), 135–58.

91 Jacques Elfassi, "Isidorus Hispalensis ep., Quaestiones in Vetus Testamentum," in *La trasmissione dei testi latini del Medioevo. Medieval Latin Texts and their Transmission*, vol. 1, eds. Paolo Chiesa and Lucia Castaldi (Florence: 2004), 208.

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Isidore's exegesis in his monumental poetic Bible called *Aurora* in a highly original composition.[92]

Some Isidorian texts fell out of favor, if the manuscript evidence is any indication. Christopher Lawson, in his edition of *De ecclesiasticis officiis*, records 102 manuscripts (complete or extracts) of that text.[93] A total of 43 of those come from our later period, and the bulk of those (32) are from the 11th and 12th centuries. Only 11 were copied after about 1200, and those are mostly extracts and abbreviations. Nonetheless, those extracts sometimes had active afterlives, such as Isidore's list of books of the Old Testament, found in *De ecclesiasticis officiis*, which is copied in both Hereford Cathedral, O. III. 2, and in Oxford, Merton College 120. In the Merton manuscript, Isidore's list is included between a 13th-century copy of Peter Comestor's *Historia Scholastica* and its index, and is used to supplement the newer, scholastic textbook.[94] Passages from *De ecclesiasticis officiis* even circulated as sermons, such as one for Christmas (inc. *Natalis domini dies*), which is found in a 14th-century sermon collection in Nürnberg, Stadtbibliothek, I, 10.[95] The same text from *De ecclesiasticis officiis* is included a homiliary from Michaelbeuern, produced in the later 15th century.[96]

A pattern appears in the later diffusion of shorter Isidorian texts: they continue to be copied after the 12th century, but usually in company with similar, modern texts. Such is the case with a copy *De ecclesiasticis officiis* in a manuscript produced in England in the later 12th century, now Oxford, All Souls College 28.[97] Two or more contemporary, monastic scribes produced a handy collection of texts on the ecclesiastical offices, beginning with Isidore's, and followed by similar works from an anonymous Roman *ordo officiorum*, Rupert of Deutz, William of Malmesbury, Drogo of Laon, and Bernold of Konstanz (attributed to Ivo of Chartres). The latter three works were relatively recent and were presented as companions or addenda to the authority on this topic, Isidore.

92 Dinkova-Bruun, "Biblical thematics," 367.

93 Christopher M. Lawson, ed., *Sancti Isidori Episcopi Hispalensis De ecclesiasticis officiis*, CCSL 113 (Turnhout: 1989), 137–41. It is likely that there are more extracts to be found in later manuscripts, but they are not likely to modify this general trend.

94 R.M. Thomson, *A Descriptive Catalogue of the Medieval Manuscripts of Merton College, Oxford* (Cambridge: 2009), 99.

95 Schneider, *Die Handschriften der Stadtbibliothek Nürnberg*, 2:7.

96 Michaelbeuern, Benediktinerstift, Man. cart. 21: *Katalog der Handschriften des Benediktinerstiftes Michaelbeuern bis 1600*, ed. Beatrix Koll (Vienna: 2000), 130.

97 Andrew G. Watson, *A Descriptive Catalogue of the Medieval Manuscripts of All Souls College Oxford* (Oxford: 1997), 55–57.

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8 The *Synonyma* and *Differentiae* in the Scholastic Age

Contrary to the decline in interest in *De ecclesiasticis officiis* is the revival of Isidore's *Synonyma* toward the end of the Middle Ages.[98] Jacques Elfassi has demonstrated that the *Synonyma* was a popular text throughout the 7th through 13th centuries (which preserve some 200 manuscript copies) but experienced an even greater surge of popularity, especially in German lands, in the 14th through 16th centuries. He dates this "golden age" of the *Synonyma* to *c.*1300 to *c.*1570. Approximately 60 percent of the manuscripts of the *Synonyma* (302 out of 507) were copied in this later period.[99] The *Synonyma* is not a linguistic work, or a thesaurus, as the name might suggest, but rather a devotional text understood better by its alternate titles of *Lamentatio animae peccatricis* or *Liber soliloquiorum*. Much like the narrator in Boethius's *Consolatio philosophiae*, the sinful soul of Isidore's *Synonyma* is consoled by Reason, who shows the sinner the path to salvation and the distinctions of virtues and vices. The *Synonyma* enjoyed its late revival for a variety of reasons, charted by Elfassi: its ascetic and moral character appealed to the devotional impulses of the 14th and 15th centuries, and it was known (to name its more famous readers) by Jan Hus, Thomas Hoccleve, and Christine de Pizan. These authors either knew the *Synonyma* directly or, more often, through an intermediary like Thomas of Ireland, who quotes extensively from the *Synonyma* in his popular *Manipulus Florum*, or in one of at least four later medieval recensions of the work (known as *Collectum*, *De norma uiuendi*, *Monita*, and *Tractatus deflentis hominis et ammonentis rationis*). Elfassi records sixteen later medieval religious texts that borrow directly from the *Synonyma*.[100] The popularity of the *Synonyma* and its recensions is also evident from the number of French translations surviving: two of the *Synonyma* itself and one of the *Monita*. In the 16th century it was also translated into German, Italian, and French yet again.[101]

98 Apart from Jacques Elfassi's many essays on the *Synonyma*, cited in his edition, *Isidori Hispalensis episcopi Synonyma*, CCSL 111B (Turnhout: 2009), the most complete study of the work (though mostly out of our chronological bounds here) is Claudia Di Sciacca, *Finding the Right Words. Isidore's Synonyma in Anglo-Saxon England* (Toronto: 2012).

99 Jacques Elfassi, "La réception des *Synonyma* d'Isidore de Séville aux XIVe–XVIe siècles: les raisons d'un succès exceptionnel," *Cahiers de recherches médiévales et humanistes* 16 (2008), 107–18.

100 Elfassi, "La réception des *Synonyma*," 114–16.

101 Elfassi, "La réception des *Synonyma*," 110. On the French translation in particular, see Geneviève Hasenohr, "Isidore de Séville, auteur ascétique 'français'?" *Romania* 128 (2010), 299–351, and 129 (2011), 23–56.

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Elfassi claims a German emphasis for the revival of the *Synonyma*, which is supported by manuscript numbers: more than half of the manuscripts from just the 15th and 16th centuries (107 of 210) are of German provenance.[102] However, a potentially earlier revival occurred in England.[103] The manuscripts of Worcester Cathedral provide evidence of this revival of the *Synonyma* and indications of how it spread. The cathedral library still possesses three manuscripts, all probably local in provenance and of the first half of the 14th century, which contain Isidore's *Synonyma* copied in collections of popular or pastoral theology, the only early medieval text copied with more recent (and often British) works: John of Wales's *Communiloquium*; shorter religious treatises of William de Montibus, Vincent of Beauvais, and Pseudo-Grosseteste; and Peter of Limoges's *De Oculo Morali* and Arnold of Liège's *Alphabetum Narrationum*.[104] Many of these manuscripts suggest the training of priests for the purposes of pastoral education and effective preaching.

By contrast, most of the later manuscripts of *Synonyma* are more strictly monastic and devotional in character, and suggest that the *Synonyma* became a standard work of ascetic spirituality among later medieval monks and canons, especially in England and Germany. The *Synonyma* features prominently in the collections of other English Benedictine houses, contemporary with or later than the Worcester manuscripts, including a remarkable thirteen copies at Saint Augustine's, Canterbury.[105] Likewise, the collection of manuscripts now in the Universitätsbibliothek of Graz, which are primarily of local provenance (Graz, Neuberg, Seckau, Seitz), like those in Worcester Cathedral, contains six copies of the *Synonyma* or its redactions.[106] One of these is of the 12th century (Graz MS 480), but the other five are all of the 15th century, and predominantly from Cistercian houses. In every example of these Graz manuscripts, Isidore's *Synonyma* is copied as part of a large collection of religious texts, typically monastic, penitential, or devotional in emphasis.

The later medieval period produced some impressive collections of Isidoriana, in which the compilers sought to gather the greatest works of Isidore together in complete copies. For example, two 14th-century volumes, one of

102 Elfassi, "La réception des *Synonyma*," 109–10.

103 Jacques Elfassi noted to me in personal correspondence (10 December 2017) that the *Synonyma* enjoyed a similar popularity during the later Middle Ages in England, France, Italy, and Spain. See also Elfassi, "La réception des *Synonyma*," 113 n. 26.

104 Worcester Cathedral Library Q. 27, Q. 72, Q. 97, described by R.M. Thomson, *A Descriptive Catalogue of the Medieval Manuscripts in Worcester Cathedral Library* (Cambridge: 2001).

105 Elfassi, "La réception des *Synonyma*," 113.

106 Graz, Universitätsbibliothek 480, 578, 583, 683, 935, 982, described by Kern, *Die Handschriften der Universitätsbibliothek Graz*.

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Isidore's *Sententiae* and the other of his *Etymologiae*, were bound together soon after (before 1500), in Merton College, MS 303.[107] A larger compilation is found in a 14th-century German manuscript, containing the *Etymologiae*, *Synonyma*, and *Differentiae*,[108] and the same three texts are copied together in a mid-13th-century manuscript from Exeter.[109] Medieval scribes found these three works to be good companions, in that each concerns the relationship of words to God and man: respectively, how the etymology of a word reflects its eternal truth, how synonymous words can be used to confess sins and address God, and how the small differences between words can highlight the order of divine creation.

The *Differentiae* contains two books, which are so different that they are sometimes treated as two distinct works, both in medieval manuscripts and today.[110] The first book, *differentiae verborum*, is more obviously about words, and it provides an alphabetical catalogue of words which are similar enough to be confused by medieval readers of Latin. The second book, *differentiae rerum*, is neither alphabetical nor clearly about words. Rather, Isidore uses the concept of *differentia* developed in the first book to provide a brief *summa* of theology, cosmology, and human nature (e.g. the difference between *Deus* and *Dominus*, *Trinitas* and *Unitas*, or *homo* and *vir*). The *Differentiae*, especially its second book, could be interpreted in the scholastic age as a linguistic work or a theological treatise (or both), if we can judge from the texts it was copied with. A 15th-century German manuscript contains just book 2 of the *Differentiae*, copied with a variety of rhetorical, epistolary, and educational texts: here, the *Differentiae* are framed as a tool to aid Latin composition.[111] The same literary tendencies are on display in the 14th-century manuscript mentioned above (Leiden, BPL 11), containing Isidore's three main treatises on words, and in two 15th-century German manuscripts from the monastery of Benediktbeuern the

107 Thomson, *A Descriptive Catalogue of the Medieval Manuscripts of Merton College, Oxford*, 303.

108 Leiden, Universiteitsbibliotheek, BPL 11 (14th century): *Biblioteca Universitatis Leidensis. Codices Manuscript III. Codices Bibliothecae Publicae Latini* (Leiden: 1912), 7.

109 Exeter Cathedral Library 3549 B (mid-13th century), with *Etymologiae* on fols 24–135, *Liber sententiarum* on fols 138–69, and *Liber differenciarum* on fols 169v–74, along with texts by Jerome and an impressive collection of Seneca (items 9–20, fols 175–295): Ker, *Medieval Manuscripts in British Libraries*, 2:841–44.

110 The first book is published in Carmen Codoñer, ed., *Isidorus Hispalensis. De differentiis I* (Paris: 1992), and the second in María Adelaida Andrés Sanz, ed., *Isidori episcopi Hispalensis Liber differentiarum* (*II*), CCSL 111A (Turnhout: 2006).

111 Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Clm 426: Karl Halm, *Catalogus codicum manu scriptorum Bibliothecae Regiae Monacensis*, vol. 3, Pars 1: Clm 1–2329, *editio altera* (Munich: 1892), 115.

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Differentiae are copied in large theological and devotional collections featuring Patristic and more recent authors, including Innocent III, Henry of Langenstein, Jean Gerson, Jerome, and Augustine.[112]

9 Conclusion

By way of conclusion, I will return to Thomas Aquinas, who (as a fictional character) directed Dante's gaze toward Isidore and his flames of divine inspiration. Thomas Knoebel, in the introduction to his translation of Isidore's *De ecclesiasticis officiis*, says of Isidore that, "by the time of St. Thomas Aquinas his authority had begun to wane."[113] This statement needs qualification. While Isidore's views on the nature of things were no longer to be accepted at face value in the scholastic age, as we have seen with the encyclopedists, he was still an intellectual force to be reckoned with, whose ideas still needed to be addressed in questions on almost any topic. Not least among those topics is the nature of law.

The real Thomas Aquinas, in his "Treatise on Law" (*Summa Theologica* Ia–IIae QQ.90–105), quotes extensively from Isidore's *Etymologiae* and *Sententiae*. Isidore considers law primarily in book 5 of his *Etymologiae*, where he provides definitions of the types of law (*ius*, *lex*, and *mos*) and statements that Aquinas could use both for and against his articles. In this respect, Aquinas is following the example of Gratian (or his students) in quoting from Isidore in the "Treatise on Laws" that opens his *Decretum*.[114] Aquinas, in *Summa Theologica*, Ia–IIae Q.90 art.2, poses the question, "Whether the law is always directed to the common good?" He provides an objection to this question from Isidore, "If the law is based on reason, whatever is based on reason will be a law" (*Etym.* 5.3), but also the contrary, "Isidore says that laws are enacted for no private profit, but for the common benefit of the citizens" (*Etym.* 5.21).[115] On the question of whether public promulgation is essential to law, that is, must law by definition be officially promulgated, Aquinas replies to one of the

112 Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Clm 4701 (1455) and Clm 4708 (1469–1472): Karl Halm, *Catalogus codicum manu scriptorum Bibliothecae Regiae Monacensis*, vol. 3, Pars 2: Clm 2501–5250, *editio altera* (Munich: 1895), 230, 232.

113 Thomas L. Knoebel, *Isidore of Seville: De ecclesiasticis officiis* (New York: 2008), 12.

114 L.R. Sotillo, "Las fuentes ibéricas del Decreto de Graciano," *Studia Gratiana* 2 (1954), 13–48; Ken Pennington, "*Lex naturalis* and *Ius naturale*," in *Crossing Boundaries at Medieval Universities*, ed. Spencer E. Young (Leiden: 2011), 227–53.

115 Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica* Ia–IIae Q.90 art.2, in *Basic Writings of Saint Thomas Aquinas*, ed. Anton C. Pegis, 2 vols (New York: 1944), 2:744.

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objections, "The promulgation that takes place now, extends to future time by reason of the durability of written characters, by which means it is continually promulgated. Hence Isidore says that *lex* (law) *is derived from legere* (to read) *because it is written*."[116] (Note that Isidore's statement is not given force of authority but is used to illustrate a point that Aquinas has already argued logically.)

Aquinas treats Isidore as more than just a handy repository of data, which is the approach typical of many scholastic authors, for he engages seriously with Isidore's ideas on the meaning and essence of law, and gives him as much, if not more, weight on the subject as he does in the case of Aristotle. Indeed, portions of Aquinas's "Treatise on Law," especially question 95 on human law, read as an extended commentary on Isidore's *Etymologiae* 5.21.[117] The third article of this question is "Whether Isidore's description of the quality of positive law is appropriate?" and the fourth article is "Whether Isidore's division of human laws is appropriate?" In both articles, after posing the usual objections to these statements from Isidore, he offers the obligatory contrary arguments: "On the contrary stands the authority of Isidore" and "The authority of Isidore suffices."[118] While Aquinas does not take Isidore's statements on law entirely at face value, since he provides extensive commentary on them and compares them with Aristotle's statements on law in his response to each article, nonetheless Isidore's authority as a saint, Father, and "schoolmaster of the Middle Ages" is sufficient for Aquinas to quash any purported objections to his words.[119]

Aquinas is, of course, not your typical scholastic author, but at the same time he is the most famous representative of scholasticism, having internalized all the available works of Aristotle and many of the best works of Latin scholasticism produced in the 12th and 13th centuries. Aquinas is a product and producer of scholastic masters who continued to read early authorities like Isidore with great respect, but with a keener eye for highlighting internal contradictions, disputes with other authorities, and outdated opinions. In short, the words of Isidore (like those of any authority) had to be weighed

116 Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica* 1a–11ae Q.90 art.4, ed. Pegis, 2:747.

117 Brian Davies, *Thomas Aquinas's Summa Theologiae: A Guide and Commentary* (Oxford: 2014), 216–17.

118 Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica* 1a–11ae Q.90 art.4, ed. Pegis, 2:787, 788.

119 Isidore's discussion of the essential criteria of law, as commented on by Aquinas, is still discussed by legal theorists: e.g. Cathleen Kaveny, *Law's Virtues: Fostering Autonomy and Solidarity in American Society* (Washington, DC: 2012), and Anthony J. Lisska, "God, Aquinas and Revisionist Natural Law Theory: The Question of Natural Kind, Natural Rights, and Positive Law," in *Reality, Reason, and Rights. Essays in Honor of Tibor R. Machan*, eds. Douglas B. Rasmussen, Aeon J. Skoble, and Douglas J. Den Uyl (Lanham: 2011), 91–113.

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against those of the two greatest authorities of scholasticism, the Bible and Aristotle. With respect to those two authorities, two different Isidores become apparent in any university or monastic libraries of the later Middle Ages: first, a Master Isidore of the *Etymologiae*, father of encyclopedias, and a revered, albeit antiquated and insufficient, scholar on the natures of things; and second, Saint Isidore of the *Sententiae* and *Synonyma*, a teacher of moral and theological truths and a guide to exploring the mystical significances of words and things. These two Isidores rarely meet in the individual manuscripts of the scholastic age, but the most perceptive readers, like Dante or Aquinas, recognized that the natural philosopher and the mystical theologian were just two faces of a profound and multifaceted Father of the Church.[120]

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120 I would like to thank Dr Jacques Elfassi again for his close reading of this essay and valuable suggestions, especially with regard to the circulation of the *Synonyma*.

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CHAPTER 19

Isidore of Seville in the Renaissance (1500–1700): The Role of Golden Age Spain

Jeremy Lawrance

1 Introduction

The respect accorded to Isidore during the Middle Ages is attested by an unbroken chain of a thousand extant MSS of his *Etymologiae*, *Sententiae*, and *Synonyma de lamentatione animae peccatricis*, and thousands more containing excerpts, compilations, or translations. His method, allied to an attractive clarity and *brevitas* (Wood 2010), influenced countless authors even when they were not consciously imitating him, so that the *Etymologiae* has been called the "Grundbuch des ganzen Mittelalters" (Curtius 1948, 487), the "source à peu près exclusive de toute la culture savante" (Zumthor 1975, 149).[1] This study reflects on Isidore's different but no less interesting fortune in the Renaissance. It focusses on Golden Age Spain, which played a significant role in the story because Spaniards exalted Isidore as one of their most eminent ancient authors, while at the same time acquiring a global empire that expanded the horizons of what was known in ways that rendered the saint's worldview obsolete—facts which serve to raise two broader questions about the legacy of Isidore in early modern Europe.[2]

1 Bischoff 1961; Marrou 1966; Reydellet 1966; Fontaine and Pellistrandi 1992; Díaz y Díaz 1993, 215–23 (to avoid burdening the notes—the early books quoted often have titles of five to ten lines—citations are by author-date, full details given in "Works Cited" at the end). As Elfassi and Ribémont (2008, 1–5) point out, statistics are provisional because the tradition has been little studied after the 12th century; they count 455 complete MSS of *Etymologiae* (henceforth *Etym.*), 449 of *Sententiae*, and 507 of *Synonyma*, but if partial copies are included, Anspach traced 1080 of *Etym.* (Anspach 1936; Fernández Catón 1966), at which point counting ceased (Van den Abeele 2008). Martín 2004, Elfassi and Poirel 2004, and Codoñer et al. 2005 remind us also of the diffusion of the other fourteen titles in Braulio's *Renotatio librorum Isidori* (*BHL* 4483, Martín 2006, 11–274, at 199–207).

2 The complexity of the pre-Renaissance tradition makes any sweeping periodization risky; there were different medieval Isidores, and though half the extant MSS date from the 14th-15th centuries, showing that he remained "au rang des autorités," he was already becoming prized less as a scientist and more as a spiritual writer (Elfassi and Ribémont 2008, 2–3, "la découverte d'Aristote et de la science arabe changèrent l'arrière-plan intellectuel des

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The first is about a quintessentially Isidorian topic, the encyclopaedia. It was chiefly for his *Etymologiae* that Isidore was regarded during the Middle Ages as an *auctoritas*, an authority in the special sense given to the word by societies that for religious reasons regard the visible world as an inscrutable delusion and written tradition—*scriptura*—as the only trustworthy source of knowledge. In the early modern period, with the rise of experimental science, scholarship, and a new curiosity, this static notion of authority began to give way to more dynamic forms of enquiry. It was not just that methods (*téchnē*) changed, as telescope and compass replaced ancient texts as tools for exploring cosmography, and even Isidore's credentials as etymologist came to be challenged by the new discipline of philology. The paradigm shift also involved society's *a priori* postulates about the content and order of the encyclopedia, the unconscious boundaries of its concept of the knowable (*epistḗmē*).[3] The episteme is determined not so much by what is in the world as by a given

encyclopédistes [...] le modèle encyclopédique isidorien fut dès lors moins prégnant"). For discussion of this point, see Winston Black's essay in this volume. The only monograph on Isidore in the Renaissance is Robert Benaway Brown, *The Printed Works of Isidore of Seville: A Trial Check-List* (Lexington: 1949); in what follows I draw on Schierbaum 2009; Eybl et al. 1995; Meier, Schuler, and Heckenkamp 2002; König and Woolf 2013, part III; Taylor 2014.

3 On the mutability of the *épistémè*, see Foucault 1966 (though he contests the notion of paradigm shift; see next n.); "static" vs. "dynamic" in the 16th century, Maravall 1965. The term "encyclopedia" is a nice illustration: Le Goff 1994 points out its "inexistence au Moyen Âge;" Lat. *encyclopaedia* was coined by late 15th-century humanists from a mistaken reading in Quintilian's account of the orator's "rounded education," *Inst. or.* 1.10.1 "orbis ille doctrinae quem Graeci ἐγκύκλιον παιδείαν [*vulg. ante 1542* ἐγκυκλοπαιδείαν] vocant" (Henningsen 1966, 1967; Fowler 1997, 27–30). Beyer de Ryke (2003, 1244, n. 5) argues that, in the more extended sense "mirror of the world" (med. *speculum*), "la chose existait avant"; and indeed, the first Spanish attestations appear to predate all others, and refer specifically to Isidore. However, they are suspect for reasons directly related to our topic: Du Cange 1733–36, vol. 3, col. 83, cites a 13th-century *Vita* of Ildefonsus attrib. to Lucas of Tuy, "he was put to study with Isidore to complete the encyclopedia of all the sciences [ut omnium scientiarum *Encyclopœdiam* absolveret]," but the reference is to Saenz de Aguirre 1694, 569a §164 and a text first publ. "ex varia librorum antiquorum lectione" in Illefonsus 1556 fol. ††1^{v}, whereas the word is absent from the *Vita*'s many medieval recensions (e.g. Martín 2011b, 197–98/2011c, 232–42; Gaiffier 1976). The 15th-century Castilian paraphrase by Alfonso Martínez de Toledo omits it too; but in his *Vida de sanct Isidoro* (1444) he seems to talk of "the famous book of *Etymologies*, the variety and doctrine of which is as great as all that contained in [...] the *encyclopedia made up of the seven liberal arts* [la encyclopedia, que son las siete artes liberales]" (Talavera 1952, 65–161, at c. 7, 77), where the Latin (also attrib. to Lucas, n. 6, below) put only "trivii [...] quadruvii investigacione" (BNM Mss/10442, fol. 5^{v}, s. XIII). If authentic, Toledo's would be the earliest occurrence in any language, but both extant witnesses, BNM Mss/1178 and Esc. Ms. b.III.1, are 16th-century copies interpolated by Alvar Gómez de Castro in the 1570s (Talavera 1952, xxxv-xlii), and the phrase is suspiciously like one in the preface to Isidorus 1577 (see n. 20 below).

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society's perception of which elements among the infinite mass of phenomena are definable as knowledge, "the strategic apparatus which allows [it] to separate out, from all the statements which are possible, [...] those that may from those that may not be characterized as scientific" (Foucault 1980, 197). Discoveries such as the existence of the New World or the heliocentric model of the universe demonstrate this point, for whereas learned Europe fully accepted the geographical implications of Columbus's landfall within eight years of his return, the Catholic Church strenuously rejected Copernicus's *De revolutionibus orbium cœlestium* of 1543, and put Galileo's 1632 defence of it, *Dialogo sopra i due massimi sistemi del mondo, Tolemaico e Copernicano*, on the Index of Prohibited Books until 1835.

The asymmetry in the fates of these two aspects of ancient cosmology, terrestrial and celestial, shows not just how culture changes what constitutes knowledge, but also how ideology and power control the articulations of that change, or, in Foucault's parlance, its "syntax." In broad terms we may conceive of the early modern European episteme as having undergone a shift from the theocentric faith of the Middle Ages towards more empirical kinds of knowledge based on reason, but the example shows that in detail the story was far more complicated. Foucault's subtitle, *An Archaeology of the Human Sciences*, refers precisely to the layered stratigraphy of overlapping continuities and new beginnings that underlies the history of ideas—the wrinkles beneath its smooth surface.[4] The task for any student of the early modern reception of Isidore's writings is to chart its course through such contradictory reticulations of ideology and epistemological change.

The second broad question arises from the first, and it concerns the specific relation between authority and sanctity. For us Isidore is a late antique writer, a cataloguer of the fading lore of the ancient world and a first-hand witness of the barbarian Christian culture that brought it to an end. One might assume that scholars of the Renaissance revival of learning found him interesting for

4 Foucault 1966, 14 "l'archéologie [...] définit des systèmes de simultanéité, ainsi que la série de mutations nécessaires et suffisantes pour circonscrire le seuil d'une positivité nouvelle." Meier (2003, 93–94, 97) likewise denies that epistemological change is unidirectional; any simple scheme of a transition from late antique/medieval arrangements by an *ordo rerum* seen as inherent (higher to lower, spiritual to material, in order of creation, etc.) to early modern "topical or methodical and systematic designs of order [...] according to 'final concepts'," and then modern mechanical, e.g. alphabetic, order because an "overarching ordering [is] no longer supportable by universal systematisation of cognition" (see Dierse 1977, Schmidt-Biggemann 1983) is belied by the fact that alphabetization sometimes occurred even before 1300, while topical arrangements persisted into the Enlightenment, e.g. the "Explication détaillée du système des connoissances humaines" prefacing the *Encyclopédie* (Diderot and d'Alembert 1751–72, vol. 1, xlvii–lii and plate).

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the same reason. A few did; but the chief concern of that age proved to be his role in *historia sacra*, as an apostle of Catholic orthodoxy. We are always conscious on some level that "Isidore" means St Isidore, yet one of the striking discoveries for any student of his fortunes in the Renaissance is that he was only canonized by Pope Clement VIII in 1598, and he was not officially declared a Doctor of the Church until Pope Innocent XIII's *motu proprio* of 1722.

These facts do not, of course, mean that Isidore was not honoured as a saint in the interim. Only seventeen years after his death the Eighth Council of Toledo pronounced in apocalyptic tones that Isidore was the Church's latest and most likely last Doctor on earth.[5] After the Muslim conquest in 712 his tomb in a chapel in the Seville townlet of Santiponce came to be venerated as a shrine (later the Cistercian/Hieronymite monastery of San Isidoro del Campo, founded 1301). By 1063 Isidore's relics were so revered that Fernando I of León obliged the emir of Seville ʿAbbād II al-Muʿtaḍid, as part of his annual tribute, to hand them over for translation to the purpose-built basilica of San Isidoro in León, where a new cult was established.[6] Thenceforth Isidore was venerated in León-Castile as a national patron, his most notable miracle being a skyborne epiphany at Fernando III of Castile's reconquest of Seville in 1248. His feast on 4 April figured regularly in the liturgical calendars of medieval Castilian breviaries, but the local aspect remained paramount; in the calendars of other kingdoms, even neighbouring Aragon and Portugal, Isidore was replaced by, or at best shared his day with, the Italian saint and (from 1295) Doctor of the Church Ambrose.[7] In the papacy's Roman Breviary 4 April was *dies non festiva*, and

5 VIII Conc. Toletanum (A.D. 653) §2 "Nostri quoque seculi Doctor egregius, Ecclesiæ Catholicæ novissimum decus, præcedentibus ætate postremus, doctrinæ comparatione non infimus, & (quod maius est) in seculorum fine doctissimus atque cum reverentia nominandus, Isidorus"—a text prefixed to Grial-Loaisa, vol. 1, fol. ¶8ᵛ, from its first published edition in Loaisa 1593, 416–76 (429). For discussion, see Mark Tizzoni's chapter in this volume.

6 The cult produced a set of hagiographical texts relevant to our story, 4 works in nearly 20 recensions (Gaiffier 1961; Fontaine 2001; Martín 2005, 2006, 2008; Silva 2009): (*i*) Redemptus, *Obitus Isidori*, s. VII (*BHL* 4482, Martín 2006, 379–88); (*ii*) *Translatio Isidori*, *c.*1063 (*BHL* 4488, Martín 2011a), revised *c.*1200 as *Historia translationis* (*BHL* 4491, Estévez Sola 1997); (*iii*) Lucas de Tuy, *Miracula Isidori*, *c.*1224, preserved only in a Renaissance MS (León, Real Colegiata de San Isidoro Ms. 63, unpubl.) and trans. (Lucas de Tuy 1525); (*iv*) some 11 versions of a *Vita* (*BHL* 4482–93), from contemporary accounts by Braulio and Ildefonsus (*BHL* 4486°, Anspach 1930, 57–64; *BHL* 4484, Codoñer 1972, 128) to the "fantastic tissue of legends" of *c.*1300 also attrib. to Lucas of Tuy (Talavera 1952, lxxxi), which via Renaissance copies from a Toledo cathedral MS (BNM Mss/10442) made its way into *Acta Sanctorum* (*BHL* 4486; Henschen 1675, 330F–351D).

7 On nationalism see Henriet 1999; for the calendar, compare Portugal (Ecclesia Catholica (henceforth EC) 1494, fol. 2ᵛ, use of Braga: Ambrose only), Roussillon and Naples, Crown of Aragon (EC 1500, fol. [*2]ᵛ, use of Elne/Elna, and BUV Ms. 890, fol. 2ᵛ, Dominican use, Naples *c.*1467: Ambrose only), Catalonia/Valencia/Aragon (EC 1479, fol. [iii]ʳ, use of Lleida; EC 1492,

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Isidore found no place in it until the first major Renaissance revision of the liturgy in 1535. It is no coincidence that this revision was the work of a Spanish cardinal, Francisco de Quiñones OFM (*c.*1480–1540), a faithful confidant of Charles V and erstwhile protégé of the cardinal-archbishop of Toledo Francisco Jiménez de Cisneros (1436–1517), the first Spanish statesman to take an interest in publishing an Isidorian text.[8] Despite Quiñones's patriotic manoeuvre, however, Isidore was once more removed from the universal roll of saints in 1568 as part of the Council of Trent's great clear-out of the Catholic calendar, which banned Quiñones's Breviary and reduced the annual feast days to only 149.[9] There were strenuous complaints, and Gregory XIII was soon pressured into restoring Spain's saints, but merely as Proper Offices for observance in the Spanish empire.[10] However, the reform of the cult of saints involved not only rationalizing the calendar but also more stringent rules for canonization based on new "criteria of humanist historical criticism" (Burke 1999, 131). At the king's behest, therefore, Spanish scholars set to work to document Isidore's cause.

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fol. [2]^{v}, Valencia; and EC 1496, fol. [*4]^{r}, Zaragoza: Ambrose and Isidore), Galicia (EC 1497, fol. [2]^{v}, Compostela: "Ambrosii epi, iiii cap. Isidori epi, ii cap."), vs. Castile-León (e.g. BNM Res/186, fol. 2^{v}, Hieronymite use, copied by "Garsias Crunensis"—of Logroño?—1463: Isidore only). A cursory trawl of *c.*100 15th-century breviaries reveals no exceptions: Isidore is absent outside Iberia and stands alone only in Castile-León.

8 EC 1535, fols †6^{r} (calendar), 304^{r} (*historia propria*), the day having been *non festiva* up to then in all Roman breviaries. On Quiñones's revision, ordered by Clement VII, see his preface to Paul III (EC 1535, fols †2–†4^{v}) and Legg 1912; for his political career, Meseguer Fernández 1958. For Cisneros's publication see below, and at n. 31.

9 The reforming commission that produced EC 1568 restored 4 April as *dies non festiva* and assigned Ambrose a Double on 7 December. On the implications for the Counter-Reformation cult of saints of the "unprecedented step" of Pius V's bull *Quod a nobis* of 9 July 1568, which made use of the new liturgy universally obligatory and outlawed Quiñones's edition (EC 1857–72, vol. 7, 685, §CI), see Ditchfield 2007.

10 A Compostela breviary published by order of Archbishop Gaspar Zúñiga y Avellaneda in 1569, less than a year after Pius V's bull (see n. 9, above), outrageously flouted the Tridentine reform by assigning a feast to every single day in the calendar—that is, even more than pre-reform editions such as EC 1567, fols †3–‡2^{v}. It gives 4 April to Ambrose, and 3 April to Isidore, with the terse note "erit mane" (EC 1569, fols ¶¶2^{v} and 371$^{r\text{-}v}$, office). A tetchy preface to the diocesan clergy (fols ¶2–5^{r}) tells how Zuñiga's plan of "revising your old Breviary" was held up by the avalanche of business from the many-headed "Lernaean monster" of Trent—pointedly, however, with no mention of the new Breviary; and the volume concludes with a peculiar device, a sword sprouting palm leaves and crowns over the motto "Last victory to the vanquished! [Cessit victoria victis]" (fol. 591^{v}). This was the sort of scandal alluded to by Gregory XIII's conciliatory breve of 30 December 1573, printed as preface to EC 1591, 3: "His Holiness had heard from representatives of our dearest son Felipe, Catholic king of the Spains, that the said edition aroused many *difficulties* in those parts"; Isidore was explicitly restored ("for whom there may be celebrated an Office of Doctor," 4).

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Continued pressure led to his definitive canonization in 1598, and hence to his inclusion in the *Acta Sanctorum* of 1675.[11]

Each of these dates turns out to be significant in the story of the early modern reception of Isidore; or rather, they *are* the story. Cardinal-Archbishop Cisneros's project in 1499 to reinstate the "Gothic" liturgy that bore Isidore's name took place in the euphoric context of Castile's sudden rise, first (with the Union of Crowns and expulsion of the last Muslim sultan of al-Andalus) to a position of primacy in the Iberian Peninsula and then (with the discovery of America and foundation of the Atlantic economy) to the rank of world power. Quiñones's inclusion of Isidore in the Roman calendar was prompted by the Catholic Church's major reassessment of sainthood and hagiography as tools for a confessional sacralization of states and territories in the wake of the Protestant Reformation of the 1520s.[12] The royal commission for the first scholarly edition of his *Opera* from Visigothic MSS was formed in 1571, in the immediate aftermath of Pius V's reformed breviary; publication in 1597–99 coincided with the date of Isidore's canonization. The inclusion of Isidore by the Bollandists in the immense enterprise of *Acta Sanctorum* in the 1670s was likewise based on the efforts of antiquarians in Carlos II's Spain, such as Nicolás Antonio (1617–84), and involved another trawl of MSS in Spanish ecclesiastical libraries. Finally, in the age of Reason, beyond the purview of this study, the convulsive separation of the powers of Church and State led to a third spurt of scholarly attention at the behest of another cardinal-archbishop of Toledo, Francisco Antonio de Lorenzana (Isidorus 1775, 1778; and see Pobladura 1961), culminating in the second and, to date, greatest project to publish the complete works (Isidorus 1797–1803), based on Grial-Loaisa and also assembled by a Spaniard, Faustino Arévalo, though by that date, as a Jesuit, he had been expelled from Spain and was settled in Rome.

In the light of the two broad topics sketched out above, one is struck by a pair of remarks in two fine recent works on Isidore. Noting that modern

11 As Burke notes (1999, 131), the Counter-Reformation resulted in a "hiatus" of 65 years in which no new saints were enlisted, until Sixtus V set the ball rolling again in 1588 by creating the Congregation of Sacred Rites and Ceremonies. It was under the dispensation of the latter's bureaucratic procedures—dependent on powerful sponsors rather than popular devotion (Gotor 2002; Armogathe 2003)—that Isidore's beatification came about, one of only six that century. Even so, he was not reincorporated into the General Roman Calendar of the universal Latin rite until 1730, with an optional memorial. Today it is only in the Spanish national calendar that Isidore is awarded a feast, on 26 April.

12 On this European context of national confessionalization see Fros 1982; Boesch, Gajano, and Michetti 2002 (especially the afterwords by Roberto Rusconi, 393–95, and Simon Ditchfield, 405–09); Backus 2003; Ditchfield 2004, 2009.

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study of Isidore began with Lindsay's Oxford text of the *Etymologiae* in 1911, which "facilitate[d] the characteristic logophily of contemporary Latin studies," John Henderson (2007, 212–13) observes: "Undoubtedly, this slant does Iberian studies no favours," but adds in passing, "for large stretches we still depend on J.B. Pérez's sparse notes in de Grial (1599) adopted by Arevallo's edition (1797–1803), which was reprinted for the Latin Patrology (Migne 1850)." So too Barney, Lewis, Beach, and Berghof, discussing the influence of the *Etymologiae* in the introduction to their translation (Isidorus 2006, 24–27), note:

> The first important scholarly edition was that of Juan de Grial, which became the basis for work on Isidore until the early nineteenth century. Its valuable notes are retained in [Arévalo's] seven-volume edition of the *opera omnia* from Rome between 1797 and 1803 [...], whose notes update and correct Grial.

Yet, apart from this sentence, the authors do not take the story of Isidore's "influence" anywhere at all beyond Dante, Chaucer, and Gower. Neither book offers any comment on why the significant editions of Isidore before the 20th century should have been made by Spaniards. We now take for granted that the saint's impact on life and thought ended before the onset of the Renaissance, and that if he has been read at all since, it is only by historians of the Latin language and late antiquity. The fact that his text was the object of prolonged attention in Spain in the early modern period perhaps strikes scholars as too odd or obvious to merit explanation; at any rate, they tend to ignore its connexion with the dispute over whether or not Isidore is a saint of the Catholic calendar, or with Spain's urgent requirement, given its Habsburg monarchs' claim to be the heirs of the Holy Roman Empire, to have at least as many Doctors of the Church as Italy.[13] These themes serve as the framework for the following notes on Isidore's reception in the Renaissance.

13 This aspect, mentioned by Burke (1999, 141, "If there was a 'Spanish preponderance' in the field of sanctity as in that of international relations, the two phenomena may not be unconnected," citing five examples of royal pressure), was made explicit by Felipe II's legates in their depositions on Isidore's canonization, in which they adduced the (spurious) chronicle of "Eutrand" (a manipulation of Liutprand) to prove it was him, not Ambrose, whom Boniface VIII made one of the four Doctors—Augustine, Jerome, Gregory, and Ambrose—when he invented the title in 1295 (*Acta Sanctorum* 1675, 327, citing Tamayo Salazar 1652, 496).

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2 The Decline of Isidore as *Auctor*

The decline in Isidore's reputation as an authority, tacitly affirmed by Barney, Lewis, Beach, and Berghof's failure to find any creative or technical author after the 14th century who was influenced by him, is reflected in a variety of Renaissance sources. It may be illustrated by referring to a case that has already been mentioned: cosmography.

In a letter to the Catholic Monarchs relating the discoveries made during his third voyage to America in 1498, Columbus reported with excitement his first and, as it turned out, only landfall on Terra Firma, the continent that he insisted to his dying day was Asia. Skirting south of Trinidad, his caravels arrived at the delta of the Orinoco in mainland Venezuela. The Admiral correctly deduced that any river which pumps fresh water seven miles out to sea must either be immensely long and therefore belong not to an island but the mainland, or else come rushing down from a great height. He convinced himself that it was both: divining that he had bumped into a continent, he leapt to the further conclusion that what he had found was the huge mountain of Earthly Paradise, which is on the equator at the far eastern shore of the world and reaches many miles up to heaven, where one may have face-to-face colloquy with God—so high, in fact, that it makes the earth pear-shaped, or at least forms a mighty nipple on its broad bosom. In support of this identification, which would have had the gratifying consequence of adding the Garden of Eden to Queen Isabel's conquests, Columbus adduced Isidore, along with Bede, John Damascene, Strabo, Peter Comestor, Ambrose, and Duns Scotus, to prove that the river he had stumbled upon was the Ganges—not a New World but India.[14] Yet within a few short years, despite the fact that the imperial name for America would remain *las Indias* for another three centuries, everyone in Europe knew not just that

14 BNM Vitr/6/7, fols 74^{r}-75^{v} (*Relación del tercer viaje*; Colón 1992, §30, 366–406, at 381ff.) "Sant Ysidro y Beda y Damasçeno y Estrabo y el maestro de la *Hystoria scolastica* y Sant Ambrosio y Scoto y todos los sanos theólogos conçiertan qu'el Paraýso terrenal es en el Oriente, etc. […] Las señales son muy conformes, […] y si de allí del Paraýso no sale [el agua], parece aun mayor maravilla. […] Yo muy assentado tengo e[n e]l ánima que allí adonde dixe es el Paraýso terrenal; y descanso sobre las razones y autoridades sobreescriptas" ("St Isidore and Bede and Damascene and Strabo and the Master of *Historia scholastica* and St Ambrose and Scotus and all sound theologians agree that Earthly Paradise exists in the Orient, etc. […] The features match very well, […] and if the river does not flow from Paradise, it seems even more of a marvel […]. I am very convinced in my soul that the place I have spoken of is Earthly Paradise; I rest my case on the afore-mentioned proofs and authorities"). His direct source was Pierre d'Ailly, *Imago mundi* 55 (1410), who used *Etym*. 13.21.8–10, 14.3.1–7. On the cartography of Paradise, Scafi 2006, esp. Chapters 3, 5–8.

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Columbus was mistaken but, more momentously, that the authorities he cited, Isidore at their head, had an erroneous concept of the globe.

It is instructive, then, to consult the cosmographical works produced for the Spanish Crown in the century after Columbus's voyages. The greatest of them were the atlases issued by Abraham Ortels, the Flemish geographer and mapmaker appointed as Felipe II's royal cartographer in 1575. By then he had already dedicated to Felipe the first-ever atlas, his *Theatrum Orbis Terrarum* of fifty-three maps. At the start it contains a catalogue of ninety-seven "Auctores"; they do not include Isidore (Ortelius 1570, fols A5^{r}–6^{v}). The first map in the volume is entitled "Orbis Terrarum" and portrays the new worlds discovered by Iberian navigators in the previous seventy-eight years; in its caption Ortels does mention "Isidorus Hispalensis," but among the "Recentiores," i.e. as a medieval source not an ancient *auctor* (fol. 1^{r}). *Theatrum* is said to have been the most expensive book ever printed up to that date; nevertheless, it sold with such alacrity that some thirty-one editions were printed between 1570 and 1612, in Latin, Dutch (1571), German (1572), French (1572), Spanish (1588), English (1606), and Italian (1608), along with five *Additamenta* (1573–97) which enlarged it to 119 maps and correspondingly plumped up the list of Auctores to 183—but still without noticing Isidore, who figures only in the one line I have mentioned.

The Spanish *Theatro de la Tierra Universal* of 1588 was dedicated to King Felipe's son, the future Felipe III. By then Ortels had also laid the basis for the critical study of ancient geography with his lexicon of ancient place names, *Synonymia geographica*, issued by the royal printer Plantijn in 1578, expanded as *Thesaurus geographicus* in 1587, and then again in 1596. *Thesaurus* was dedicated to the canon of Toledo García de Loaisa (1534–99), whom we shall encounter shortly as Juan de Grial's fellow editor in the great royal edition of Isidore commanded by Felipe II; yet Isidore appears in the book's Index only as "Isidore corrected," with reference to his errors about Blemyes, Clitorius, Ceos, Erinus, Gelonium, Helles, Telos, and Tragoditae. Admittedly another late antique writer on the Goths on the same page, Jordanes, receives even shorter shrift ("A truly depraved author […] His hallucinations […] His errors cleared up"), but compare Pliny the Elder, who gets half a column with subentries such as "Annotated […] Emended […] Defended […] Excused"; and the same holds for Ptolemy and Pomponius Mela. Lest we hastily conclude that this was because Ortels, being more modern than poor old Columbus, was almost as clever a critic of sources as we are, under *Amazons* his entry reads "Their homeland […] Whom they married […] Where they were defeated by Theseus."[15]

15 Ortelius 1588, fol. *2 "Nobili ac R° domino Garciae Loaysa, sanctæ Toletanæ ecclesiæ archidiacono" (2nd ed. 1596, fol. †2 "*doctori* Garciae *de* Loaisa *Giron, Regi ab eleemosynis,*

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Meanwhile, in 1579 Ortels had started his *Parergon*, a series of maps illustrating ancient and sacred history that first appeared as supplements to *Theatrum*. They were published as a separate volume in 1595, shortly before his death; the last and finest edition came out in 1624 with a handsome epigraphic dedication to Felipe IV. The first map of secular history, "Geographical figure of the ancient age [...] up to A.D. 1492," sports a caption expatiating on Columbus's magnificent boon to humanity and how much greater the empire of the Felipes was than the "Roman world or Roman empire" of the Caesars shown in the next map.[16] Isidore figures not at all in either caption, and he plays almost no part in the rest of the work either. I have spotted only two passing mentions. One is on siting the Urals in the "undiscovered and fabulous" far north of the map of Europe: "almost all the Ancients believed this, [...] but all of them wrongly [...], neither these nor any other [mountains] are to be seen there today; [...] but Isidore locates the Riphaean forests here, and claims the River Don has its source in them."[17] The other is in the caption to the map of ancient Hispania, which at six leaves is the longest in the book. If we expect this to be where Isidore finally steps into the limelight, we are in for a shock. Ortels quotes Pliny, Strabo, Solinus, Pomponius Mela, and over thirty other ancient authors, even scraping the barrel of such recondite local sources as Eulogius of Cordova and "Pseudoberosus" (Berosus of Babylon, one of Giovanni Nanni da Viterbo's forged pre-Roman sources on Spain invented in 1498 to flatter the Catholic Monarchs), the Bible, Augustine and Jerome, various MSS, inscriptions, coins, and modern scholars such as Henri Estienne, Casaubon, J.J. Scaliger, and also Ambrosio de Morales and Benito Arias Montano, who were prime figures in Felipe II's project for the Isidore edition mentioned above. Yet from Isidore he culls just a single word: "*Striges* is the name for a sort of Hispanic garment in *Etym*. 19.23." That is to say, in the entire work Isidore is adduced only

Principique a studiis, archidiacono *Caracensi* ['of Guadalajara'], *canonico* Toletano"); Qq1^{r}-Rr2^{v} "Index rerum et nominum" (2nd ed., *2^{r}-**4^{v}), at Qq3^{v}/**1^{r} "Isidorus corrigitur," "Iornandes auctor valde depravatus [...] Hallucinatur [...] Emaculatur"; Qq5^{r}/**2^{v}-3^{r} "Plinii locus adnotatur [...] Emendatur [...] [Defenditur *add. 2a ed.*] [...] Excusatur," "Pomponius emendatur," and "Ptolemæus emendatur [...] Arguitur [...] defenditur"; Qq1^{r}/*2^{r} "Amazonum domicilium ubi [...] [Cum quibus connubia *add. 2a ed.*] [...] Ubi à Theseo victæ."

16 Ortelius 1624, fol. VIII "Aevi veteris typus geographicus [...] usque ad annum Salutis nonagesimum secundum supra milles. quadringent." and fold-out map; and ix "Orbis Romanus sive Romanum Imperium."

17 Fol. x "Europa sive Celtica vetus," caption "incomperta & fabulosa [...] tota ferè credidit antiquitas, [...] omnes autem falsò [...], ubi nedum hi sed & nulli hodie visuntur. [...] Riphæas silvas hic habet Isidorus, & Tanaim inde effluere dicit."

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for his amusing mislocation of the *montes Rhipaei* (Urals) and a vulgar Iberian word for underpants.[18]

Ortels's treatment suggests that the epistemological shift brought about by the voyages of discovery had relegated Isidore to the Gothic Age. To us it sounds a fair statement of fact, but in the Renaissance "gothic" was not a descriptive term but a damning value judgement; and this applied not just to cosmology. In the preface to lib. 2 of his *Elegantiae*, the "Magna Carta of humanism" (Dionisotti 1967, 152), Lorenzo Valla dubbed Isidore the "prime babbler and ignoramus of all time" about the Latin language.[19] The *Etymologiae* nevertheless made the transition from script to print (the Augsburg *editio princeps* of 1472 was one of the earliest incunables), and have of course comfortably outlived Valla's works. Yet the first scholarly edition, published under the title *Origines* by Flemish humanist Vulcanius (Bonaventura de Smet) alongside the 5th-century Carthaginian Vandal Martianus Capella's *De nuptiis Philologiae et Mercurii*, despite a preface praising the two works because "they embrace not just any one art but the whole circle of sciences which the Greeks call *enkyklopaideía*," really envisaged them not as encyclopedias but as sources of curious antiquarian

18 Fols xiii–xiv "Hispaniae veteris descriptio" "*Striges* nominat Hispanorum vestium genus Isidorus Originum 19, cap. 23." To be fair, this was more interest than anyone else showed; there is no note on *stri*[*n*]*ges* in any 16th- or 17th-century edition of *Etym*. 19.23.1, even Juan de Grial's, though other terms in the same sentence attracted his attention (Grial-Loaisa, vol. 1/1, 382b-383a comments on Pers. *sarabara*, Gaul. *linnae*, Ger. *rhenones*, Sard. *mastruca*). The word is not listed in humanist dictionaries like Robert Estienne's *Thesaurus linguae Latinae* (Isidore conspicuously absent from his sources, Stephanus 1531, vol. 1, fol. *4^{v}), nor yet by Du Cange; only, with no mention of Isidore, in Calepinus 1509, sign. T8^{r} "*Strigium* vestis hispanica. Plau. Nudus est, iurat se tribulo strigium oppignerasse," and thence Ravisius Textor 1520, "Vestimentorum genera" §99 (fol. 228^{v})—garbled from some old glossary, this made its way into expanded later editions of Estienne, but still no mention of Isidore (Stephanus 1573, vol. 4, 157a; cf. Gesnerus 1749, vol. 4, 573–74 "Haec nescio unde venerint, et longum modo est quaerere"). Ortels was the only author to locate the word in Isidore before the Benedictine revision of Du Cange (1733–36, vol. 6, col. 773 s.v. Striga[4], conjecturing *strix* < *striga*, via *stica* "tunic" in medieval *Glossae Isidorianae*; cf. Vulcanius 1600a-b, repr. in Isidorus 1601, 959–75; Arévalo, vol. 7, App. 24, 443–93, at 488). It was left to Carpentier (1766, vol. 3, col. 884 *s.v.* striga[4]) to uncover the word's actual meaning "breech-cloth" from medieval charters ("Chartoph. reg. [1394] Ch. 394 *unes estraintes à homme*. f. Interius subligaculum, vulgo *Caleçon*"; "strula, *veste de cul*"; repr. in Du Cange 1840–50, vol. 6, 390c, 393).

19 Valla 1540, 41–42 "quicunque aliquid de Latinitate scripserunt balbutire vid[e]ntur, quorum primus est Isidorus, indoctorum arrogantissimus, qui quum nihil sciat, omnia præcipit." Completed in 1449, the *Elegantiae* were printed in 1471 and republished over 150 times in the succeeding century. After Valla's and Poggio's onslaughts (Stevens 1975), humanist mockery of the *lucus a non lucendo* style of etymologizing became a topos (Codoñer 2003).

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linguistic lore, as the addition of texts "on the primitive language [*de prisco sermone*]" from *veteres grammatici* Fulgentius, Nonius Marcellus, Donatus, Festus, et al. showed.[20]

In Spain, however, for chauvinist and imperialistic reasons pains were taken to rebut Valla. As Amy Fuller shows in this volume, certain of the more regressive features of Isidore's mentality—his apocalyptic anti-Semitism, for example, or his wildly ignorant and tendentious misrepresentations of ancient paganism and mythology—could conveniently be adduced to formulate and justify, or on occasion criticize, the Crown's immense project of eradicating Native American systems of "idolatrous" culture and belief in the New World. But even on the strictly scholarly side there were attempts at rehabilitation. Juan de Grial's preface to his edition of the *Etymologiae* points out, for example, that Isidore's concern was not with what Varro called *etymology*, "the thing *from* which a word comes," a puerile task for *grammatici*, but *semantics*, "the thing *to* which it is applied," the high calling of philosophers who "take the sounds only as a starting-point, and seek to throw light not so much on *words* as on *things*."[21] Nonetheless, though the *Eytmologiae* continued to be cited by

20 Isidorus 1577, fol. 2^{r} "non unam aliquam artem sed totum orbem scientiarum, quem ἐγκυκλοπαιδείαν Græci vocant, complectuntur." Buridant (1998, 16–17) points out that the principle behind medieval etymology—*nomen est omen*, i.e. not historical linguistics but allegory (Del Bello 2007, 49–60)—was, on its own terms, scientific: the "scientia cognoscendi diccionum singularium significaciones." His ensuing claim that this valuable insight "brise de façon décisive la dichotomie positiviste entre période préscientifique et scientifique" doubtless overstates the matter; to ignore the distinct kinds of truth-claim made by science and allegory risks making Isidore and medieval grammarians look naive, which they were not. When a 15th-century lexicographer said "est ethymologia unius vocabuli per aliud vocabulum magis notum […] expositio, ut dicendo *DEUS* quasi *D*ans *E*ternam *V*itam *S*uis" (ibid. 13, 18), he was under no delusion of contributing to linguistic science; he meant ἔτυμον in its (etymological) sense "true meaning" ("Etymologia est *veriloquium*") and intended the conceit of the acronym to be understood as a divine hieroglyph enucleating a theological proposition about God—a rational idea, given the postulates upon which it was based (that God exists, speaks in Latin, etc.), but one that we need have little compunction in calling "prescientific." More to the point, perhaps, is Bloch's siting of medieval grammar within a broad cultural model characterized by "la fixité et l'inhérence des valeurs sémantiques et sociales;" in this sense "le principe de l'étymologie […] articulé sur la généalogie" may be seen as akin to their concern with lineage, etc. (1989, 127). See further Curtius 1948; Guenée 1980; Charlet 2003; Del Bello 2007.

21 Grial-Loaisa, vol. 1, fols ¶¶2^{r}-¶¶3^{v} "ἐτυμολογική, *a* qua re vocabulum sit impositum […] περὶ σημαινομένων, *in* qua re […] occasionem tantum in vocibus captant, neque tam *verbis* quam *rebus* lucem inferre student" (cf. Varro, *De lingua Latina* 5.1); or as Zumthor (1975, 157) puts it, "la recherche du vrai *dans* ou *par* les mots." Grial's view of Isidore's epistemology was in fact historically rather accurate (see n. 20, above). In a similar vein Antonius

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many Renaissance writers, it is clear that even inside Spain what scholars had really come to prize was their quaintness: weird derivations, strange vulgar words, definitions of bygone *realia*. In the dedication to Felipe III of his *Tesoro de la lengua castellana*, the best known Spanish lexicographer of the age lauded Felipe II's enterprise of publishing Isidore as the direct inspiration for his own work ("he took great pains to have the works of the glorious St Isidore, Doctor of the Spains, corrected and emended from various original sources and newly printed with scholarly care [...], particularly his *Latin Etymologies*"); yet he added, with a hint of acid, "others had treated the same topic before the holy Doctor, and many moderns have done so after him." The upshot is that he mentions Isidore only 91 times in a text of 1.14 million words.[22]

Was it some kind of irony, then, that the chief Renaissance authority on the topography of the ancient world, in a succession of atlases addressed to kings of Spain who at the time were engaged in the greatest project of Isidorian scholarship of that or any succeeding age, saw fit to quote *Etymologiae* only in connexion with remote Russian forests and an obscure Hispanic *hapax* for an

(1696, 250–52 §91 and §94–98) replied to nitpicking (*vellicatum*) about "some less felicitous derivations in his vast work on etymologies [aliquas minùs feliciter deductas origines in vasto *Etymologiarum* opere]": Isidore was pursuing the higher of the two kinds of etymology, not the "potential" derivative kind ("δυνάμει, hoc est *potentiâ*, à quibus potuerit nomen duci") but "actual" semiotics ("ἐνεργείᾳ sive *actu*, ad quę vocabulorum auctores verosimiliter respexerunt"). In the Enlightenment Arévalo still felt moved to defend Isidore (Arévalo, vol. 1 *Isidoriana*, cs 34 "Recentiorum quorumdam de Isidori scriptis iudicia varia expenduntur," 49 "Doctorum hominum de Isidori Etymologiis iudicia," 254–57, 409–16), but by then arguments from cultural relativity were vain—"progress" had been invented—so he fell back on the saint's own excuse, *Etym*. 15.1.2 "we should not condemn those who allege various things inexpertly, for *antiquity itself* created the error [nec varia dicentes imperite condemnare debemus, quia antiquitas ipsa creavit errorem]" (254).

22 Covarrubias 1611, fol. ¶8r "hizo gran diligencia para que las obras del glorioso San Isidoro Doctor de las Españas se corrigiessen y emendassen por diversos originales y de nuevo se imprimiessen con mucha curiosidad [...], y particularmente de sus *Etimologías Latinas*. [...] Antes de el santo Doctor avían otros tratado el mesmo argumento, y después de él muchos modernos." Though a royal chaplain, Covarrubias never failed to emphasize that he was first and foremost a university man ("licenciado") and it is clear that, nationalism notwithstanding, mentally he subscribed to the humanist view of Isidore, an attitude even more patent in the discussion of etymology in the preceding "Carta al autor" of *licenciado* Baltasar Sebastián Navarro de Arroita (fols ¶4r-¶5v). Arroita remarks that though Varro's fanciful patriotic Latin derivations for Greek loanwords could not fool any knowledgeable person, they succeeded in deceiving "the blessed St Isidore, who [...] gave the not-so-pious occasion to mock him, thereby weakening his great authority among the rigorous critics of our times [dio ocasión a la irrisión de los no tan píos, y a que su grande autoridad se enflaqueciesse por esse camino acerca de los Críticos rigurosos de nuestros tiempos]," naming among the latter Perotti and the Scaligers, and having sarcastic fun himself with a few "ridículas Etymologías."

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article of underwear? Not at all; it was normal. What it really reflected was not that Isidore held an alien concept of etymology—Renaissance and Baroque ideas about the origin of language were at least as fantastical—but that he definitively marked that rupture with the Hellenic component of ancient science which we call the Dark Ages. Ptolemy was not rendered obsolete by the voyages of discovery in the same way as Isidore; his scientific method remained compatible with the new episteme despite his ignorance of America (Portuondo 2009, 20–58). Equally telling is the contrast with Pliny, who remained an inspiration for enquiry; whereas he was the object of copious commentary and translation—including two 16th-century Spanish versions, the second commissioned by the Crown—, nothing comparable happened to Isidore.[23] Passages from *Etymologiae* 5–6 were, it is true, included as an appendix to a work on chronology by Mercator and Beroaldus (1577), but such signs of him being used in a scientific context are exceedingly rare. There were no free-standing commentaries, no translations; for though the *Etymologiae* had been partly turned into Castilian in the 13th century and a MS was acquired from Cuenca Cathedral by Gaspar de Quiroga and sent to the Escorial in 1579 for Felipe II's *Opera* project, it was never printed.[24]

One may object—it is a pertinent point—that Isidore wrote many other works besides the *Etymologiae*. His *Sententiae* were no less popular in the Middle Ages, and served as a pattern for the scholastic method embodied in Peter Lombard's work of the same name; but though they were translated into Spanish in the 15th century (*Del soberano bien*, BNM Mss/405, 6970, 9504; García Rives 1950) and the text was reprinted a few times in the Renaissance, the important edition being that by García de Loaisa (Isidorus 1593, repr. in Grial-Loaisa, vol. 2, 1–111), Isidore seems by then to have been little more regarded as a theologian than as a scientist; he was valued for his methodical approach to

23 See Beagon 2016. Greenblatt (1991, 82–83) argues that Isidore's Eurocentric world view played an influential role in promoting the ideology of conquest and colonization, and (22) that his fantastical account of monstrous races (*Etym.* 11, 14) gave Renaissance writers their model for categorizing the radical otherness of the New World as savagery; but Twomey (2003, 76–77, 80) points out that there is little evidence that Isidore was the direct source. The citation adduced by Greenblatt, Jean de Léry's *Voyage faict en la terre du Brésil*, in fact names Pliny (Lery 1578, "Preface," fol. [ī]5^{r} "je me suis retracté de l'opinion que j'ay autresfois euë de Pline & de quelques autres, descrivans les pays estranges, parce que j'ay veu des choses aussi bigerres & prodigieuses qu'aucunes qu'on à ten[u]es incroyables dont ils font mention").

24 Isidorus 1983, 15–16, 24–25, citing records of the request by Quiroga (who figures again below) and surrender of the MS to the king by Bishop Rodrigo de Castro y Osorio, a noted antiquarian, in Cuenca, Archivo Capitular, Actas capitulares 1579, fol. 3^{v}; 1580, fol. 4^{r}; and Esc. Ms. b.1.13, s. XIV, flyleaf *ex-libris*.

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compilation and the antiquity of his sources, but he was not influential as an authority.[25] His chronicles were objects of deeper enquiry, but though the first edition of the *Historia Gothorum* was by the French scholar Pierre Pithou (Isidorus 1579), scholarly interest was chiefly confined to countries where the Gothic legacy was important for dynastic reasons: Spain and Scandinavia.[26] The only work of Isidore's that remained in living circulation, in the sense that it was read for other than antiquarian motives, was *Synonyma*, his devotional dialogue between Sinner and Reason. Despite its peculiar style—an extended *jeux d'esprit* of synonymic wordplay—it is the only work of his that was popularized in translations (German, French, Italian, 1560s), and it remained in print up to the Counter-Reformation (1470 to 1566, at least 21 editions, mostly printed in Protestant Germany). Elfassi (2008) talks of an "immense succès," but qualifies this by noting that it was "indirect, au deuxième voire au troisième degré," through centos or second-hand quotations often attributed to Augustine or Ambrose. Though these false attributions showed the work's standing, they also signalled the "chant du cygne" of Isidore's influence on real life. After 1570 the *Synonyma* was not translated or reprinted again, except in the national editions of his *Opera* of which I am about to speak (Grial-Loaisa, vol. 2, 367–91; Arévalo, vol. 6, 472–523), until the 20th century.

3 Canonization, Sanctity, and Nationalism

This brings us to the other aspect of Isidore's fortune in the Renaissance, the question of his sanctity, and why Spain remained the exception to the perceptible decline in Isidore's standing elsewhere in Europe. The growth of national feeling is one of the best-known features of Renaissance culture, but one should distinguish between modern ethnic nationalism, a poisonous form of political mobilization promoted by nation-states and their opponents, and earlier kinds of patriotism, which sprang from more localized senses of identity rooted in

25 For a while in Germany during the Lutheran reform Isidore's exegetical works attracted notice: Isidorus 1529 "ex codicibus antiquissimis," 1530. Antiquity held out the promise of biblical *fontes* uncorrupted by the sophistries of popish scholastic sources; the titles call him not Doctor (nor even saint; the first, more Lutheran one says *beatus*) but *theologus vetustissimus*, *pervetustus*. On Hagenau printer Johann Setzer's Lutheran sympathies see Flood and Shaw 1997, 55 n. 27; on Erasmian Johann Heil of Cologne, Lülfing 1972.

26 Grotius 1655, for example, was compiled in 1637 to serve the Swedish Crown, while Isaac Vossius, editor of the text of Isidore's *Historia Gothorum* included in this posthumous edition of Grotius, was Queen Christina's librarian (Eriksonas 2004, 190, nn. 53–54; Nellen 2014, 747–48, nn. 54–57; Mengelkoch 2012; and in general Birns 2013).

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the customs of a particular place. The difference manifests itself in various ways. As Antonio Mestre (1995) points out, in the course of the 16th century the figure of the humanist grammarian gave way to the *erudito*, the antiquarian scholar who was still not yet what we call a critic. A characteristic task of these antiquaries was to search for facts within the nation's past that would justify its present political constitution. I have mentioned the imperative to establish Spain as the true successor of the Roman empire; this involved not only elaborating a new but appropriately "antique"-looking ideology of imperial absolutism, but also discovering, or affecting to discover, condign evidence, epigraphical, numismatic, archaeological, and literary, of the Spanish contribution to Roman civilization—for example, by investigating ancient authors from Hispania. Equally valid in Spain's case was to praise the Gothic history of the Iberian kingdoms, or trace the pre-classical ethnography and toponyms of the Peninsula; or to engage in projects of a more dubiously scientific nature, such as the confection by Giovanni Nanni of a chronicle by Berosus of Babylon purporting to prove that the Catholic Monarchs of Spain descended from Noah, and the Spaniards from Tubal's tribe of Tobelos mentioned by Josephus (*Antiq*. 1.6.1). More notorious frauds were Jerónimo Román de la Higuera's fabrication of chronicles by Julian of Toledo and Flavius Marcus Dexter of Barcelona, and his manipulation of the genuine chronicle of Liutprand of Cremona to yield one written by a Spanish-domiciled "Eutrand."[27]

Naturally kings were keen to patronize such endeavours when the antiquaries' discoveries could be used to legitimize their power or favour their economic interests. In a classic study of English antiquaries H.B. Walters (1934) showed how Henry VIII employed John Leland to scour the national records for precedents for his exercise of the royal prerogative and rupture with Rome, so justifying his expropriation of Church property. Redefining the relation of Church and State, whether in this confessional sense or in terms of the kingdom's internal jurisdictions, was a standard motive for such antiquarian activities, and Felipe II employed his royal chronicler Ambrosio de Morales (1513–91) for parallel purposes.[28] Hence missions to ransack ecclesiastical libraries became a

27 For the relevance of this last to the Renaissance fortune of Isidore see n. 13, above; on the *falsos cronicones*, the recent studies in Olds 2009, 2015; and Olds 2014 for a specific documentary insight into how Higuera's activities included defending Spain's saints against post-Tridentine sceptics like Cardinal Cesare Baronio (EC 1586; see n. 41, below). The broader context is set out by Kelley 1970, 1988, and the studies in n. 12, above; and for our subject, Taylor 2014.

28 As a young Hieronymite novice Morales is said to have followed Origen's unfortunate lead in interpreting the call to disarm the Tempter literally, by castrating himself; but he afterwards went to Rome and obtained a dispensation to live as a secular cleric. *Memoria sanctorum*

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characteristic late Renaissance form of scholarly employment. The publication of Isidore's *Opera* resulted from just such a project.

To comprehend the regal motives behind the plan to induce the papacy to recognize Isidore as a Roman saint and Doctor of the Church, of which the Grial-Loaisa *Opera* formed a part, we may also recall the particular role of *historia sacra* in that period. As Simon Ditchfield notes (2012, 72–73), "research into the ecclesiastical past of institutions, cults, orders, dioceses, and peoples could serve a variety of purposes beyond simply challenging opposing faiths"; it played a vital role in "the formation of and reflection upon confessional identities"—and, we may add, national or supra-national identities, for in the huge multiethnic Spanish empire religious cult and practice was a most important agglutinating factor. But these more than merely dogmatic or apologetic uses of the Christian past created pressures towards kinds of historical manipulation—*pia fraus*, in Catholic terminology—similar to those at work in the field of secular history. The fact is very evident in the 16th- and 17th-century Spanish hagiographies of Isidore. The long and learned account of his *Vita* in *Acta Sanctorum* is concerned with little else than sorting out the reliable from the false in the by then abundant Iberian literature on the subject, of which the epitome is the monumental *Martyrologium Hispanum* of Tamayo Salazar (1652), described by Enlightenment luminary Mayans as one of the most

qui orti sunt in Hispania (1541–, unpubl.; Morales 1765, x §18) led to a post in Alcalá's Colegio de San Felipe y Santiago, founded by Felipe II in 1551; his first royal commission dated from 1559, and nomination as *cronista real* followed in 1563. His 1572 trip "por orden del Rey" to search for relics and materials, the basis of the great collection of Isidorian MSS assembled in the Escorial library used for the Grial-Loaisa edition (Antolín 1923), is reported in BNM Mss/2063 (Morales 1765). By then he had been appointed the king's *procurador* in the cause to canonize Diego de Alcalá (1567–88), and overseen the translation from Aragon to Castile of the "relics" of the 4th-century child martyrs Justus and Pastor lauded by Prudentius (Morales 1568). While pursuing the Isidore project, besides publishing three volumes of his chronicle and path-finding studies on the archaeology of Spain based on the novel procedure of sending out a questionnaire to elicit topographical *relaciones* from other *eruditos*, Morales edited Eulogius of Cordova for Bishop Ponce de León, who provided him with a Visigothic MS from Oviedo (Morales 1574); wrote a *Discurso* to show Felipe II's blood relationship to St Dominic (Morales 1586); and compiled *informaciones* upholding the historicity of St James and privileges of the see of Santiago, or those of the see of Toledo, where he was rewarded with a benefice by Cardinal-Archbishop Quiroga. A worthy scholar; but to talk of "strict scientific rigour" or a "modern approach," as some do, is to skate over a vital aspect: all these works—most devoted to defending the indefensible—were expressly confected to serve his powerful patrons' vested interests. On this instrumental side of antiquarianism, besides Édouard 2003; Van Liere 2006, 2012; Collins 2014, see in general Gimeno Pascual 1998, Mora 1998.

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superstitious men in Spain's history.[29] To achieve the needful purge the Bollandists resorted to the standard procedure of requesting Spanish scholars to search for MSS and other evidence in archives; by these means and the application of critical method they not only pruned out many accretions of credulous legend but also established a convincing canon of Isidore's authentic works.[30] Nevertheless, sifting still remained on the agenda for scholars in the Age of Reason, when the same process was undertaken once again. Its results were related by Rodríguez de Castro (1786) and brought to a peak in the still useful two-volume introduction to Arévalo's edition of 1797–1803, *Isidoriana*, which together with his critical text and apparatus represented the fruits of over two centuries of such research, undertaken in his case—as in the first endeavour of Spanish humanist scholarship to do with Isidore in 1499, of which more in a moment—for the cardinal-archbishop of Toledo and primate of the Spanish Church, himself a distinguished antiquarian (see Lorenzana 1782–93; Esteve Barba 1942; Sierra Nava 1975).

On the aspects which he addressed Arévalo achieved as much as any subsequent scholar; but he makes clear his debt to the Grial-Loaisa edition. Even the latter was not the first such project. As early as 1499 the Archbishop of Toledo Francisco Jiménez de Cisneros, sponsor of another great project of humanist textual criticism, the Complutensian Polyglot Bible, commissioned for patriotic reasons an edition from old MSS of the Mozarabic liturgy attributed to Isidore, a project carried out by the humanist Alfonso Ortiz and a team of Toledan clerics.[31] The idea of an edition of *Opera omnia* based upon the same idea of a team of scholars collecting and collating Visigothic originals was urged

29 On Tamayo's methods see Henriet 2002, who does not shy away from the term "forgeries" or calling his erudition "fausse." As Olds 2015 reveals, such terminology may be too simple; the technique was normally to use genuine old documents, but—doubtless with sincere intent—to correct their regrettable deficiencies; hence Higuera's fabrications took nearly two centuries to unravel and discredit. We should also recall that the rationalism of the 17th-18th centuries was not universally accepted; you can lead a horse to water but you cannot make it drink, so churchmen even in the 20th century persisted for pastoral reasons in resurrecting the legends. Few texts are as instructive in this regard as the tragicomic preface to Lucas de Tuy 1947—the date, in the wake of Franco's "nationalist" coup, speaks volumes—by the abbot of San Isidoro de León, which now strikes us as a good deal more superstitious than any 14th- to 16th-century hagiography.

30 The role of Iberian scholarship is fully acknowledged in Henschen 1675, and also alluded to in Spanish sources such as Antonius 1696. On the general context see Boesch Gajano 1985.

31 Isidorus 1500, 1502; see Martín Patino 1963; García Oro 1992; Gonzálvez Ruiz 2004. Ortiz's edition was reedited by Lorenzana (Isidorus 1775), equally patriotically; but it is notable that Isidore's claim to authorship was not thought substantial enough to include the Mozarabic liturgy in Isidorus 1580, Grial-Loaisa, or Arévalo.

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upon Felipe II in 1571 by another future archbishop of Toledo, the aforementioned Gaspar de Quiroga (1512–95), at the suggestion of a university humanist of that city, Alvar Gómez de Castro (1515–80). The latter drafted a proposal to the king's secretary Antonio Gracián. After lamenting the dearth of editions of Isidore's works due to "the loss of many in the wars and troubles in Spain after his death, and others lying unrecognized in certain of this kingdom's ancient libraries," Castro plays subtly on the project's patriotic dimension:

> Your Majesty would do a deed most acceptable to God and greatly redounding to the profit of his holy Church by ordering a search for all the works of this saint that could be found in the places I have mentioned, and then, after collecting them all, having them very correctly printed, just as His Holiness has recently ordered the printing of the works of St Thomas, and as Your Majesty's father the Emperor Don Charles did with the works of El Tostado, the bishop of Ávila, *to the illustrious credit of our nation* […]. I have said all this so that Your Majesty may see the resaon for honouring this great saint, *whose devotion along with other things has suffered a cooling-off*; and […] for bringing to light his works and publishing them throughout the world, so that alongside the Royal Bible which is about to appear there may also appear such a great interpreter of it […] under Your Majesty's auspices.[32]

A battery of royal letters ensued, urging Castro and his team to use every means to gather and collate Isidorian MSS, including ordering institutions to "donate"

32 Madrid, Instituto Valencia de Don Juan, Envío 78[196], in Antolín 1923, 69–71 "Haría Vuestra [Majestad] una obra muy accepta a Dios, y que redundaría en el provecho de su sancta Iglesia, mandar que se buscassen todas las obras deste santo que en los lugares que tengo dicho se pudiessen hallar y, después de juntarlos todos, hazer que se imprimiessen muy correctos, como ahora su Santidad ha mandado imprimir las obras de sancto Thomás, y el emperador don Carlos padre de Vuestra Majestad las obras del Tostado, obispo de Ávila, con las quales *se ha illustrado nuestra nación* […]. He dicho todo esto para que vea Vuestra Majestad la razón que ay de honrar este gran sancto, *cuya devoción con otras cosas está resfriada*; y […] sacar a luz sus obras y publicarlas por el mundo, para que juntamente con la Biblia Regia, que saldrá agora, salga también un tan gran intérprete della […] con los auspicios de Vuestra Majestad" (my emphases). "Biblia Regia" referred to another project of Felipe II then at press, the Antwerp Polyglot (Arias Montanus 1569–73); "devoción […] *resfriada*," an icy allusion to Trent's messing with Spain's saints. There follows mention of MSS found by the tireless Pedro Ponce de León, bishop of Plasencia (Andrés 1967). The king's reply six months later (18 March 1572) ordered Gracián to arrange "la Impressión delas obras de S. Isidro" and asked for Castro's "relación que por su carta offresce delos libros antiguos deste S°. y delos lugares donde se hallarán, y todo lo demás que V.m. entendiere se puede hazer çerca desto" (BL Egerton MS 2047, fol. 275^{v}).

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them.[33] Castro was to spend the rest of his life on the task, gathering MSS and preparing a text of *Etymologiae*; on his deathbed he wrote that he had tracked down 16 codices and nearly finished collating them.[34]

In that same year, however, there appeared a rival edition, published by the French Benedictine Marguerin de La Bigne in Paris (Isidorus 1580) and incorporating Vulcanius's *Etymologiae* (Isidorus 1577). Vulcanius was a Spanish subject and had spent the years 1559–70 as librarian to Bishop Francisco de Mendoza y Bobadilla in Burgos, then to his brother Archdeacon Fernando de Mendoza in Toledo; he must have learned of Felipe II's project, and was perhaps irritated not to be asked to take part (note, for example, the date of Vulcanius 1597—stealing a march again?). As for La Bigne, his edition was part of an enterprise to publish a complete *Patrologia* expressly designed as an orthodox Catholic riposte to the many Patristic editions appearing from Protestant presses, notably in Basel—the very place where Felipe II seems originally to have planned to print his Isidore.[35] Doubtless the stormy reception of the

33 The story is unravelled in Antolín 1923; Andrés 1975; González Cuenca, in Isidorus 1983, 25, 56 & nn. 21, 44; Nascimento 1984, 2008; Díaz y Díaz 1993, 227–28; Dávila Pérez and Lazure 2000–02; Taylor 2006; Codoñer 2009.

34 In his will of 12 September 1580, four days before his death: "De las *Etimologías* de san Isidoro tengo diez y seis volúmines de mano, y algunos de letra Góthica, y uno ympreso [...] El libro mío de las *Etimologías* que está todo glosado y escontrado con estos originales, [...] con todos los demás papeles y anotaciones que a propósito desto tengo, darse-án a quien su Mag. mandare" (San Román 1928, 560–62). Castro goes on to say he had finished emending all but lib. 19, which was to be passed to Mariana, while "los libros que faltan de sacar en limpio" were to be given to "Pantino flamenco, criado del Sr. García de Loaisa [...], el qual lo revea y añada el griego conforme a como está en el original y como lo an hecho él y Escoto [Schott] todo este estío en mi compañía," with a later instruction that Agustín's notes be inserted (565); see also Alvar Ezquerra 1980, vol. 1, 206–11. Castro's papers on Isidore duly passed to Loaisa, and were thought lost in the Lisbon earthquake of 1755; but see Nascimento 2008.

35 The post-Tridentine motives behind La Bigne's *Bibliotheca* are explored by Petitmengin 1975, its relation to the printing of Spanish Fathers—Isidore among them, but by no means him alone—analysed in Taylor 2014. The idea of publishing the Philippine Isidore in Basel is alluded to in a letter of 15 April 1572 from Gracián to Arias Montano (who was in Antwerp overseeing the printing of the *Biblia Regia*, n. 32 above): "Aunque el hazerse la Impression [of Isidore] *fuera destos Reynos* paresçe trae Inconviniente por algunas razones que se han considerado, todavía ha paresçido que, mientras en España se descubren todos los más originales que se pudieren hallar, [...] sería bien que *esse Impressor de Basilea* embiasse | aquí lo que tiene hasta agora estampado delas obras deste sancto, *para que se viesse su diligençia y cuydado*, y avisasse delos originales antiguos que tiene y del número delas obras que hasta agora ha descubierto y piensa impremir, para que visto y cotejado con lo que acá se hallare se pueda asu tiempo, pues el negoçio no tiene prissa, *tomar enella resoluçion que paresçiere mejor*" (BL Egerton MS 2047, fol. 286^{rv}, my emphases). I do not know who "that Basel printer" of Isidore in the 1570s was, but Felipe's

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Antwerp Biblia Regia (and Arias Montano's fall from grace in 1579: Lazure 2011) helped change the king's mind on that count, but we lack evidence as to exactly when he did so; as the most indecisive ruler in Spain's history, it would be no surprise if it took some time. All these facts and dates must interconnect, though we cannot be quite sure how. Interestingly, for example, Isidore was not at first included in La Bigne's patrology; so, did Vulcanius approach La Bigne, rather than the other way round? Yet one thing remains clear: the appearance of the rival edition had no dampening effect on the openly nationalist Philippine project. Undeterred by Gallic shots across the bows, Felipe's antiquaries were to slog on for two decades more.[36] La Bigne's was no contemptible effort; it included works printed for the first time, readings from four old French MSS, and extensive indices. The Spanish team consulted it, but Grial-Loaisa was well under way and proceeded independently. Castro's draft text of *Etymologiae* with Agustín's and Chacón's notes, for example, was already far advanced by 1580 (n. 34, above); but by the time it was printed Grial had doubled the number of MSS collated to over 30, and added further annotations by himself and Antonio de Covarrubias.[37]

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intention to publish there is clear. Even so, Gracián ends: "He tenido todo el contentamiento possible de que su Mag^{d}. aya tomado de veras este negocio, assí *por lo que toca ala honrra de nuestra naçión* como porque se comiençen a favoreçer y estimar negocios de letras."

36 Archival records concerning the project in the 1580s are less explored in the scholarly literature (n. 33, above) than those of the preceding decade. This might tempt us to conclude that La Bigne's untimely emission stalled work for 13 years; the illusion is dispelled by Schott's letter to Quiroga still talking of it in the present tense on a.d. IV Idus Aprilis (10 April O.S./20 April N.S.) 1581, despite Castro's death on 16 September 1580 ("Divi Isidori [...] libris qui Regis sumtu tuoque auspicio *adornantur*," Schottus 1582, 3–4), and by Portuondo's discovery (2009, 157–58 & nn. 58–63) of fresh documents on the role of Gracián's successor Juan López de Velasco, whose letters of 1584–87 show him still busily fussing over incoming Isidore materials, and being paid to curate and edit them. And there are more sources yet to be explored, e.g. 15 letters in BL Egerton MS 2047, fols 285^{v}-305^{v} *Cartas escriptas por mandado de Su Mag^{d}. por el secretario Antonio Gracián* (April 1571–March 1576), to Castro (n. 32, above), Morales, Arias Montano (n. 35, above), D. de Covarrubias, Ponce de León, the dean of Toledo Diego de Castilla, etc.; and a *Memoria de los libros de Sant Isidro que yo el licenciado Ponçe he buscado en todas las librerías desta ciudad de Sevilla por mandado del Arçobispo* [Rodrigo de Castro] of 1582 in New York, Hispanic Society of America HC385/280 (plus his transcript of a MS of Isidore's *Chronicon*; Faulhaber 1983, 1, 459–61, §467). Much also remains to be done on the text's printing; but the chief outstanding desideratum is a textual study of the team's critical method, to build on Asensio 1981; Andrés Sanz 2002; Codoñer 2009.

37 Grial mentions using "triginta aut eo pluribus manuscriptis libris in hoc opere [*Etym.*] emendando," and variants from La Bigne's "Parisiensis editio" of *Sententiae* (Grial-Loaisa, vol. 1, fols ¶2bis^{v}, 3^{r} "Ad lectorem").

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For reasons like these the edition took over quarter of a century; but more impressive than the lapse of years was the roster of names enrolled in the project by Gaspar de Quiroga and Alvar Gómez de Castro. Many of the country's leading *eruditos* were co-opted: besides Ambrosio de Morales and the biblical scholar Arias Montano (1527–98), they included Antonio Agustín (1517–86, antiquarian and jurist, pupil of Andrea Alciato at Bologna, bishop of Tarragona); the Jesuit historian Juan de Mariana (1536–1624); the canons of Toledo and patrons of El Greco Diego de Covarrubias (1512–77, canonist) and his brother Antonio (1514/24–1602, Hellenist); university professors Pedro de Fuentidueña (1513–79, theologian) and Cipriano Suárez S.J. (1524–93, rhetorician and biblical exegete); humanists Juan Bautista Pérez Rubert (1534–97, another protégé of Quiroga, canon librarian of Toledo, Hebraist and ecclesiastical historian, bishop of Segorbe 1591), and in Rome Pedro Chacón (1520–81, classicist); and learned foreigners, such as Andreas Schott S.J. (1552–1629, antiquarian and Hellenist, protégé of Quiroga, correspondent of Casaubon and Grotius), and Pieter Pantin (1555–1611, Loaisa's librarian 1579–95, Schott's fellow student at Louvain and successor as professor of Greek in Toledo, 1583). That all were faithful subjects and servants of the Spanish Empire goes without saying, but there was nothing narrowly Peninsular about their learning; their international contacts and outlook were broad. A number had been delegates at Trent (Arias Montano, Agustín, both Covarrubias, Fuentidueña) or held posts in the Curia at Rome (Quiroga, Agustín, Mariana, Schott, Chacón). Before the project was finished many of the original team had died (Quiroga, Castro, Agustín, Morales, Chacón, Fuentidueña). At court, after Antonio Gracián's death in 1576, the role of coordinating the project was taken over by the king's *cosmógrafo*, Juan López de Velasco, who issued further royal orders to ecclesiastical libraries to "surrender" their Isidorian MSS to the Escorial; he himself was paid to correct the edition of *De ecclesiasticis officiis*, and it was he who suggested the Salamanca theologian and poet Luis de León be asked to "correct" other texts, though León declined (Portuondo 2009, 158). Leadership of the editorial task passed to the two men whose names were eventually to figure on the preliminary pages of the final product: Castro's place as general editor was taken by Juan de Grial, professor of Latin at Salamanca, while Quiroga's role devolved upon the royal chaplain and canon of Toledo García de Loaisa y Girón (later Quiroga's successor as archbishop, 1598), an ecclesiastical historian and editor of *Collectio Conciliorum Hispaniae* (Loaisa 1593). It was the latter who finally set the ball of publication rolling with preliminary editions of Isidore's *Chronicon mundi* and *Sententiae*, printed with dedications to Felipe II at Turin (Isidorus 1593a-b).

It was, then, in every sense a collaborative effort; different scholars were responsible for the various texts, and annotations were contributed by several

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hands over the course of years.[38] In search of early witnesses, "códices góticos," "en letra mozárabe," or "en caracteres lombardos," they travelled all over the Peninsula. Morales unearthed MSS in monasteries and churches in Galicia, Castro not only ransacked Toledo's cathedral library but also journeyed as far afield as Portugal (1575). We know of these missions not just from the editors' correspondence and autograph notebooks, or royal *cédulas*, such as the *privilegio* printed at the start of the edition, but from mentions in paratexts to other works, such as Schott's dedication to Quiroga of his edition of another "scriptor Hispanus antiquissimus [...] Hispanorum doctissimus," Pomponius Mela (Schottus 1582, 4; see n. 36, above).[39]

Given the size of the task and the primitive means at their disposal, the fifteen men's twenty-five-year labour was in fact quite speedy. Not so the printing of the resulting edition, which took four years, finally bearing fruit only after Isidore's canonization in 1598. It was published by another of Felipe II's grand cultural enterprises, the Typographia Regia, set up in its own premises in Madrid in 1592 under the direction of Salamanca-based Florentine printers Giulio and Tommaso Giunti (Junta)—the latter being granted the perpetual title *Impresor del Rey* on 24 August 1594—with the task of producing high-quality illustrated editions of religious and official texts to compete with foreign presses and so ensure that the king's subjects were provided with books in tune with imperial and Counter-Reformation ideology.[40] *Divi Isidori Hispal. episcopi Opera*'s emblematic engraved frontispiece aptly conforms to this template; the classical portico with its allegorical figures of Ecclesia and Religio flanking the royal arms makes clear the link between Crown, Church, and nation, showing that the king's intent fell firmly within the ambit of propagandistic display, Catholic *historia sacra*, and Isidore's role as iconic Spanish saint.[41] The same

38 Grial in his preface (Grial-Loaisa, "Ad lectorem," vol. 1, fols ¶2bis^{r}-[A5]^{r}) gives a summary, text by text, of the contributions of each collaborator. The bibliography on them is large but uneven (the bulk of it on the first six, e.g Alvar Ezquerra 1982; Crawford 1993; next to nothing on Grial). On general aspects of their scholarship, Gil Fernández 1981.

39 In this sense it was typical of Renaissance styles of scholarly networking (Bustamante García 2002; Van Liere 2007), but the extent and longevity of the enterprise and its high profile made it extraordinary.

40 On the Imprenta Real (not to be confused with the later Imprenta del Reino) see Pérez Pastor 1914–26, vol. 4, 409–43; Morales Borrero 1976. Giunti's post (held by his heirs until 1658) paralleled that of *prototypographus* granted in 1570 to Christoffel Plantijn in Antwerp for printing Ortelius's atlases and the *Biblia Regia Polyglotta* mentioned above (see pp. 612–13 and n. 32).

41 Online at, e.g.: <http://www.bibliotecavirtualdeandalucia.es/catalogo/consulta/registro.cmd?id=7221>. Checa Cremades (1987, 40) shows the image was plagiarized, with what looks like deliberate irony, from a frontispiece designed by Rubens and engraved by Mi-

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link is made in Felipe's *privilegio* of 28 November 1595 on the following leaf; Isidore is presented as a Doctor of the Church, a Spaniard, and a saint, not as a classical author or encyclopaedist. The king also professes his personal devotion to the saint, his own ancestor at 38 removes according to a polite fiction much played upon in the edition's preliminaries.[42]

In the event the king who had spent so much promoting the project did not live to see the book, dying on 13 September 1598. Grial's dedication is addressed to his heir, Felipe III, but it hammers home the same points, laying stress on the saint's antiquity and "weighty authority in matters ecclesiastical or civil" and making a striking attack on the "danger" of "the back-to-front 'elegance' of certain persons" (a patent swipe at Valla) who as dwarfish epigones of the revival of letters ("in this age of ours when *light* seemed to dawn on things once more") insisted on disdaining Isidore's works, leaving them "cast down from their estate, scarce anywhere to be found, at any rate in no great repute" or even, to their "effeminate [*delicati*]" palates, "liable to recriminations and exposed on every side to calumnies." The express aim of the edition, Grial proclaims, was to encourage "other leading men of erudition, *not just among us but abroad*," to vie in studying his team's "most laborious harvest of the Spanish

chelangelo Grandi for Baronio's revision of the *Martyrologium Romanum* (EC 1586)—the papalist cardinal, detested in Spain for his destruction of the legend of St James, would have been upset at the replacement of his religious motto and image of the world on its knees before Christ by the royal arms and centrepiece inscription of Felipe II's royal title—but unlike St Mary in Baronio's plate, Isidore is not haloed, despite the fact that by the time the book came out his canonization had been ratified by Rome (the plate is signed at the foot of the right column by the Italian engraver Cristoforo Cartari and dated "1587," an error for 1597, the year given in vol. 1's colophon, p. 168[bis]; the imprint CIↃ. IↃ. XCIX (1599) must therefore have been added later). The saint's iconography (crozier, mitre, volume of works) may be based on images in the Real Colegiata de San Isidoro in León (Fernández González 1998, 149–50), but the two female allegories are exact copies of the model: *Ecclesia*, bare-headed, carrying the tiara and Keys of St Peter and the Fisherman's ring on her middle right finger, with the crown of her motto ("Sola coronat"); *Religio*, veiled as a nun carrying a basilica, with the roses and lilies of hers ("Nec lilia nec rosae desunt").

42 Felipe's words are in Grial-Loaisa, vol. 1, fol. ¶[1]r "aviendo noticia que las obras del glorioso S. Isidoro *Doctor de las Hespañas* andavan mal escritas y depravadas [...], y desseando el remedio dello *por la mucha devoción que al Santo tengo* y el servicio que en estos Reynos se le debe, mandé buscar en las librerías antiguas dellos." The king's devotion should not be taken lightly; his obsessive-compulsive attitude to saints' relics was mentally abnormal (Lazure 2007) even for that age, when superstition was officially promoted as a substitute for faith, to counter scepticism and science. For the spurious blood relation see Alvar Gómez de Castro, *Genealogía de sant Isidoro, con la declaraçión del grado de consanguinidad* [...] *con la Magestad del Rey Don Phelippe segundo nuestro señor*, in Esc. Ms. b.III.1, fols 173–97.

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Doctor's works […], as aids and documents for the protection and propagation of religion."[43]

4 Conclusion

It cannot be said that Grial's exhortation succeeded in getting learned Europe to take up the cudgels on behalf of "the Doctor of Spain," or that his travails reversed the perceptible decline in Isidore's *auctoritas*. The evidence suggests that elsewhere scholars were content to go on using La Bigne's edition.[44] In this respect Grial-Loaisa fared little better than Grial's pedantic proposal to rename Isidore *Hispalitanus*, not *Hispalensis* (vol. 1, fol. ¶2bis^{r} "Ad lectorem"). One should conclude, however, by recognizing what Felipe II's team *did* achieve. The Renaissance reversal in Isidore's fortune as an influence upon life, thought, and action was historically inevitable and irreversible, but I hope to have shown that the story was more complex than we might assume. That age was ostensibly interested in aspects of Isidore—his nationality, his sanctity, his genealogical relationship to royal families—that seem of little interest or value to us. Despite this, however, the shift in the episteme had in fact worked to his, and our, benefit. Scholars may have taken him less seriously as an authority than at any time since the 8th century, but the removal of the medieval rose-tinted spectacles had paradoxically led people to find out far more about *him* and his works, and in a far more empirical and scientific way, than they had ever done before. And that was a first step towards taking him seriously on his own terms, and understanding him in all the particularity of his own historical moment.

43 Ibid., fol. ¶2 "auctoritas in rebus vel Ecclesiasticis vel civilibus gravior […] præposteram quorundam hominum elegantiam […] restituta hac nostra ætate re litteraria, cum lux rebus reddita videretur. […] de statu deiecta, vix ullo in loco, exiguo certè cum honore, […] criminationibus obnoxia calumniisque obvia & exposita […] alii, non nostri modò sed externi etiam eruditione præstantes viri […] laboriosissima Hispani Doctoris excerpta, […] tuendæ propagandæque religionis adiumenta […] atque documenta."

44 La Bigne's 1580 volume was reissued by the same Parisian press in an augmented version by Jacques Du Breul incorporating some matter from the Spanish edition (Isidorus 1601, 789–958 "Notae virorum doctorum in quosdam libros Divi Isidori Hispalensis Episcopi per Joannem Grialum collectæ et auctæ"); and again in Isidorus 1617. La Bigne used Vulcanius's *Etym.* (Isidorus 1577), as we have seen, and this too had been reissued in Gothofredus 1585, cols 818–1326, along with Godefroy's own appendix of *variae lectiones* (cols 1905–22, mostly conjectures, with an occasional variant "in vet. cod.," "in manuscripto codice", "alii"—the closest thing to an apparatus criticus before Grial), which in turn was reprinted in 1595 and 1602. Grial-Loaisa, on the other hand, was not published again until 1778, and only in Spain.

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CHAPTER 20

Archiving Idolatry: Isidore of Seville and the Recording of Native Superstition in the New World

Amy Fuller

1 Introduction

As Jeremy Lawrance has already attested in this volume, we know that Columbus cited Isidore in a letter he wrote to Ferdinand and Isabella during his third voyage to the erroneously named "Indies" in 1498.[1] If we take a cursory glance at a map of the Spanish Empire's "New World" territories, it would seem to suggest a continuation of Isidore's influence, due to the many towns and cities named "San Isidro" from Argentina to the Philippines. This chapter will focus on Isidore's reception in New Spain in particular, and in modern-day Mexico we find five towns named San Isidro, plus an additional six in areas that formally belonged to Mexico but are now in the United States. However, most of these were named after San Isidro Labrador: Saint Isidore, the patron of farmers and of Madrid, rather than the former archbishop of Seville. Indeed, just as Lawrance has demonstrated that Isidore's fate as an authority in early modern Spain was rather inconsistent, tracing his influence in the "New World" is not a straightforward task either.

Columbus returned to Spain from his historic first voyage on 15 March 1493, and on 4 May that same year, Pope Alexander VI's bull of *Inter caetera* gave the Catholic Monarchs permission to conquer the "New World" lands in the name of Spain, in return for Christianizing the people who lived there.[2] It would be another thirty-one years until the start of the "Spiritual Conquest" of Mexico, and one of the tools created to facilitate the conversion of the indigenous people were encyclopaedias compiled by friars that detailed all aspects of the lives and culture of their native charges, in order to gain an understanding of their religious practices, with a view to eradicate their pagan beliefs. The first printed edition of Isidore of Seville's *Etymologies* was issued by G. Zainer at Augsburg

1 See Jeremy Lawrance's chapter in this volume.

2 It is worth noting that the territory included in this bull was renegotiated with Portugal in the Treaty of Tordesillas, 1494. For discussion, see Ondina E. González and Justo L. González, *Christianity in Latin America* (Cambridge: 2008), 28.

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in 1472.[3] This was followed by ten further editions by 1500, and according to O'Malley, after the first edition was printed, there were more than a thousand manuscripts of Isidore's *Etymologiae* circulating in Europe.[4] Copies of this encyclopaedic work would therefore have been available in abundance for those who needed it. It would be logical therefore to assume that the *Etymologies*, which functioned as a "little library for Christians without access to a rich store of books [...] in order to furnish capable Christian minds," would be perfect for those travelling to the "New World" with limited resources, and would serve well as a model for archiving idolatry.[5]

This chapter will demonstrate that there is considerable evidence to suggest that Isidore influenced the practice of chronicling pagan culture in Mexico, but it will also show that the extent of Isidore's impact in this area is not easy to assess. Tracing Isidore's reception with regards to the fight against native superstition is not a straightforward task. It will require an examination of many of his works, along with an exploration of the progression of his ideas on conversion, and the reception of his methodology for recording knowledge. The dissemination of works influenced by Isidore will also require consideration, as their success or failure would ultimately have had an effect on the continued significance of Isidore in the "New World."

2 The Spiritual Conquest

When a "New World" full of people with no prior knowledge of the Christian God was discovered, an apostolic mission was agreed as the best course of action to facilitate conversion. Cortés's first letter to Charles V, sent in 1519, before the siege of Tenochtitlan, indicated that there was no time to waste in beginning this process, as such was the indigenous Mexicans' penchant for human sacrifice that "not one year passes in which they do not kill and sacrifice some fifty persons in each temple."[6] In case the king was in any doubt of the gravity of the situation, Cortés clarified that "this land seems to us to be very large, and to have many temples in it."[7] He estimated the total number of souls sacrificed in any given year to be at three thousand or four thousand, leaving Charles with no option but to act. According to Cortés's account,

3 Stephen A. Barney, W.J. Lewis, J.A. Beach and Oliver Berghof, *The Etymologies of Isidore of Seville* (Cambridge: 2006), 27.

4 John W. O'Malley, *The Jesuits II: Cultures, Sciences, and the Arts, 1540–1773* (Toronto: 1999), 359.

5 Barney et al., *The Etymologies*, 19.

6 Hernán Cortés, *Letters from Mexico*, 36.

7 Cortés, *Letters from Mexico*, 36.

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despite their awful practices, the people of Mexico would make excellent converts, as they were extremely devoted to their religion (albeit one that was clearly demonic). They were also highly intelligent, and therefore they would be perfectly capable of understanding the word of God. A symbolic twelve Franciscan friars were sent to Mexico in 1524, as the first to embark upon the difficult process of converting the Nahua to Christianity, with Dominicans and Augustinians to follow in 1526 and 1533, respectively. Once the Spiritual Conquest was underway it became apparent that there were myriad obstacles for the friars to overcome: not least was native resistance to adopting the "True Faith," and, as Robert Ricard has explained, "there were too few workers for such an abundant harvest."[8] The vast territory and difficult terrain meant that regions distant from the administrative centre in Mexico City were hard to reach, and therefore took much longer to convert.

Despite the friars' best efforts to eradicate traces of the religious practices, many of the Nahuas' beloved idols were small enough to be hidden and worshipped in secret, which inevitably led to relapses into idolatry.[9] Moreover, the language barrier on both sides meant that it was difficult for friars to know whether the people had ever really understood their teachings anyway. Though many endeavoured to learn the native tongues, with Nahuatl (the official language of the Aztec Empire) being the most commonly used as an auxiliary language, there were still massive difficulties to overcome in translating doctrine, due to the lack of availability of equivalent terms. The Trinity and Holy Ghost, for example, could not be effectively explained in the indigenous languages, and elucidation via the use of approximate words would be less than ideal, and could be considered heretical.[10] The Franciscans, however, were quite practical in their approach to conversion and were open to incorporating indigenous rituals and ceremonies alongside the Christian liturgy.[11] Spoken Nahuatl was converted phonetically into a written form, using the Latin

8 Robert Ricard, *The Spiritual Conquest of Mexico: An essay on the Apostolate and Evangelizing Methods of the Mendicant Orders in New Spain: 1523–1572*, trans. Lesley Byrd Simpson (Berkeley: 1982), 23.

9 This is something that Toribio de Benavente Motolinía bemoans throughout his *Historia de las Indios de la Nueva España*, Francis Borgia Steck, ed. and trans., *Motolinía's History of the Indians of New Spain* (Washington, DC: 1951).

10 For a discussion of the problems faced by those attempting to convert the Nahua, see Fernando Cervantes, *The Idea of the Devil and the Problem of the Indian: The case of Mexico in the sixteenth century* (London: 1991); Ursula Lamb, "Religious Conflicts in the Conquest of Mexico," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 17 (1956), 526–39; David Tavárez, *Invisible War: Indigenous Devotions, Discipline, and Dissent in Colonial Mexico* (Stanford: 2011).

11 Fernando Cervantes, "The Bible in European colonial thought c. 1450–1750," in *The New Cambridge History of the Bible from 1450 to 1750*, ed. Euan Cameron (New York: 2016), 818.

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alphabet, and the Franciscan Order took the decision that instruction was to be in Latin and Nahuatl in preference to Spanish.[12]

The first focus of missionary effort was to be directed toward the children who would become the teachers of the parent generation.[13] Fray Toribio de Benevente Motolinía (1482–1568), one of the first twelve "apostles" to arrive in New Spain in 1524, discusses this practice in some depth within his *History of the Indians of New Spain*, explaining in Chapter 13 of the third treatise how the converted children would keep an eye on the rest of the community, including their own parents, and report back to the friars. Similarly, another Franciscan, Fray Bernardino de Sahagún (1499–1590), was a participant in founding and directing the early primary schools and was engaged in the instruction of the youth. The sons of indigenous nobility were assembled near the monasteries where, besides Christian doctrine, they were taught to read, write, preach, and sing.[14] Many of the missionaries discussed the need to separate the native children from their parents in order to ensure that they were not taught the idolatrous ways of their ancestors.[15] Though it would be impossible to claim a direct influence, this practice would seem to echo legislation passed during the Fourth Council of Toledo (633), which was presided over by Isidore of Seville.[16] The council decreed that children resulting from unions between Jews and Christians should go with the Christian parent if the Jewish spouse failed to convert, and Isidore also declared that children of Jewish parents were to be given to monasteries or to God-fearing Christians and separated from their parents in order to avoid following in their error.[17]

The missionaries' lack of knowledge about the indigenous religious practices was also a barrier to successful conversion, as without knowing what

12 Arthur J.O. Anderson and Charles E. Dibble, eds., *General History of Things of New Spain: Florentine Codex*, 12 vols (Santa Fe: 1950–82), 1:9.

13 Anderson and Dibble, *General History*, 1:9.

14 Anderson and Dibble, *General History*, 1:9.

15 It is worth noting also that in the later colonial period, as the population of Spanish women in Mexico grew, the status of indigenous and mixed-race women fell. Children resulting from unions between Spanish men and native or mixed-race women were sometimes taken away from their indigenous or *mestiza* mothers in a practice that derived from a Spanish tradition of relieving so-called "wayward" women of their children. This meant that generations of children were therefore raised as "Spanish," despite their mixed heritage, and taught to believe that their mothers' indigenous culture was inferior. See Karen Vieira Powers, *Women in the Crucible of Conquest: The Gendered Genesis of Spanish American Society, 1500–1600* (Albuquerque: 2005), 78.

16 For discussion see Rachel L. Stocking, *Bishops, Councils and Consensus in the Visigothic Kingdom, 589–633* (Ann Arbor: 2000); also see Céline Martin's chapter in this volume.

17 Stefan K. Stantchev, *Spiritual Rationality: Papal Embargo as Cultural Practice* (Oxford: 2014), 105. For discussion, see Raúl González Salinero's chapter in this volume.

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aspects of their culture pertained to religion, how could they possibly know what needed to be eradicated? On this premise therefore, and with plenty of evidence to suggest that the Spiritual Conquest had been fairly superficial and had allowed idolatry to continue unchecked due to a lack of cultural understanding, the Franciscan, Fray Bernardino de Sahagún, supported by his superiors in the order, produced the "twelve Books of the divine, or rather, idolatrous, human, and natural things of New Spain."[18] Sahagún believed that the friars needed to learn all there was to know about the daily lives and customs of the indigenous people, in order to understand and eradicate their pagan practices fully. He claimed that:

> The physician cannot advisedly administer to the patient without first knowing of which humour or from which source the ailment derives. Wherefore it is desirable that the good physician be expert in the knowledge of medicines and ailments to adequately administer the cure for each ailment. The preachers and confessors are physicians of the souls for the curing of spiritual ailments. [...] To preach against these matters, and even to know if they exist, it is needful to know how they practiced them in times of their idolatry, for through our lack of knowledge of this, they perform many idolatrous things in our presence without our understanding it.[19]

Therefore, by knowing what to look for, missionaries would know what to combat.

In order to gain a working knowledge of indigenous customs, Sahagún compiled an encyclopaedia detailing every aspect of Aztec life and culture by undertaking painstaking interviews and collaborating with natives. *The General History of the things of New Spain* (now known commonly as the *Florentine Codex*) was the result of this work. It took over thirty years to complete and was first written in Nahuatl and then translated into Spanish, presented in its final form as a bilingual work with two parallel columns. The mass conversion of a pagan people unaware of the Christian God had not been attempted since the early Roman Church, and so Roman and Greek gods were the obvious model for explaining the role and function of Aztec/Mexica deities. As Macfarlane attests, Isidore of Seville was the first of the Patristic writers to compile a comprehensive reference work containing "practically everything that it is necessary

18 Anderson and Dibble, *General History*, 1:35.

19 Bernardino de Sahagún, *General History of Things of New Spain*, book 1, prologue.

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to know" about the pagan gods, and pagan culture in general.[20] It is therefore very possible that Isidore's methods would have been employed in the compilation of works detailing indigenous practices in the "New World," and it would seem that Isidore's fastidious nature was reflected in Sahagún's need to account for everything in order to facilitate successful conversion. This would also appear to echo Isidore's decision to compile the main deviations that had developed through time from Christianity and Judaism's doctrinal core. This has also been highlighted by González Salinero in his chapter, which explained that "Isidore thought that in order to combat heresy effectively, it was convenient to recognize the dogmas on which heresies were based."[21]

3 The *Florentine Codex*

Despite the fact that the *Etymologiae* was not available in the library of Tlatelolco, where Sahagún was based, Victoria Ríos Castaño attests to its celebrated nature, and argues that "Sahagún must have been acquainted [with it]."[22] In fact, she identifies several similarities between the *Etymologies* and the *Florentine Codex*, stating that Isidore had "struggled for two informing principles that resound strongly in the *Historia universal*; those of encyclopaedism and linguistic purity."[23] In particular, Ríos Castaño has identified similarities that would suggest that Isidore exerted a great degree of influence on book 8 of the *Historia universal*, on kings and lords, especially. Here she attests that "that the majority of its thematic elements, including the description of markets, adornments, attire, hairstyle, hobbies, games, food and drink, houses, judicial procedures, and education, are identifiable in Isidore's work."[24] Ríos Castaño provides evidence for this influence in the way in which Isidore discusses the adornments of Roman women, which is reflected in Sahagún's descriptions of the clothing and hairstyles of the Aztecs.

We also find considerable links between Isidore and Sahagún in the way in which they present the etymology of the terms they describe: Isidore in Latin and Sahagún in Nahuatl. Ríos Castaño demonstrates that "with regard to the etymology of birds' names, Isidore is certain that an onomatopoeic approach

20 Katherine Nell Macfarlane, "Isidore of Seville on the Pagan Gods (*Origines* VIII.11)," *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society*, New Series 70 (1980), 4.

21 See Raúl González Salinero's chapter in this volume.

22 Victoria Ríos Castaño, *Translation as Conquest: Sahagún and Universal History of the Things of New Spain* (Madrid: 2014), 19.

23 Ríos Castaño, *Translation as Conquest*, 119.

24 Ríos Castaño, *Translation as Conquest*, 123.

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is the rule rather than the exception [… and] Sahagún is likewise keen to attach an onomatopoeic etymology to many of the birds described in Book XI [of the *Florentine Codex.*]"[25] Another example provided by Ríos Castaño would be Isidore and Sahagún's

> […] shared emphasis on shapes, colours, and even items of nourishment that reminded them of another aspect of reality […] Isidore perceives the Milky Way as a road, bright and white as milk, and believes this association to justify the origin of the phrase. Similarly, Sahagún understands that the origin of the word *citlalsunecuilli* [a constellation] is unravelled on the basis of the physical similitude between the stars and the shining S-shaped amaranth seed tortillas.[26]

It would seem that Sahagún's cataloguing of Nahuatl terms in order to understand the Aztec way of life and worldview was inspired by Isidore's approach to the origin of words.

If Isidore's *Etymologies* provided inspiration for the recording of everyday matters, such as attire and astrology, we can safely assume that he may have influenced the archiving of idolatry also. However, when it comes to this matter, Ríos Castaño suggests that Augustine had a greater influence on Sahagún's writing, with *The City of God* providing a particularly useful model.

> Augustine resolved to write *De civitate dei* after the sacking of Rome by the Visigoths in 410 […] Sahagún, reiterating Augustine's words, argues that the acquisition of knowledge on the pagan fictions and falsehoods is necessary to furnish indispensible 'armas' (weapons) for the Spiritual Conquest. […] He justifies the presence of Nahua gods, ceremonies, mythology, astrology, and auguries in [the] *Historia universal* as informed by Augustine's precept.[27]

Of course, to an extent, Augustine's greater influence upon Sahagún's *Florentine Codex* is understandable due to the fact that Augustine was writing at a time in which the threat of paganism was felt to be real, whereas the same concerns were not as pressing in Isidore's day. Indeed, González Salinero has explored this topic in Chapter 12 of this volume, explaining that "it does not

25 Ríos Castaño, *Translation as Conquest*, 125.
26 Ríos Castaño, *Translation as Conquest*, 126.
27 Ríos Castaño, *Translation as Conquest*, 132.

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seem that Isidore had to contend with many heretical movements during his time as head of the Sevillian episcopacy."[28] As Wolfram Drews explains:

> Isidore never discusses the existence of pagan inhabitants of the kingdom in any of his works, even though such people are attested until the second half of the seventh century. Yet the evidence for 'pagan' beliefs and practices was not substantial enough to promote their social representatives to the position of opponents of Visigothic society.[29]

Perhaps for the same reason, Isidore himself had been influenced by Augustine's take on paganism, as Katharine Nell Macfarlane explains: "The patristic writers upon whom [Isidore] drew, such as Lactantius and Augustine, were engaged in a struggle with paganism. As a result, the information they incorporated about the pagan gods was the foundation of tightly reasoned arguments ridiculing the gods and demonstrating the many inconsistencies in the pagan religion."[30] Therefore, it is likely that despite the encyclopaedic model offered by Isidore, Augustine was more helpful to Sahagún when it came to archiving idolatry.

Indeed, the prologue to book 3 of the *General History of Things of New Spain*, or *Florentine Codex*, entitled "The Origins of the gods" details Augustine's influence by way of explaining the decision to examine the origin myths of the Aztec deities.

> The divine Augustine did not consider it superfluous or vain to deal with the fictitious theology of the gentiles in the sixth Book of the City of God, because, as he says, the empty fictions and the falsehoods which the gentiles held regarding their false gods being known, true believers could easily make them understand that those were not gods nor could they provide anything that would be beneficial to a rational being.[31]

Sahagún believed that it was important to ensure that these beliefs were kept as a record for future reference, because although some believed that the fight against idolatry was being won, Sahagún stated that they should not underestimate the devil's power to return and deceive again, and as such it would be

28 See Raúl González Salinero's chapter in this volume.

29 Wolfram Drews, *The Unknown Neighbour: The Jew in the Thought of Isidore of Seville* (Leiden: 2006), 255.

30 Macfarlane, "Isidore of Seville on the Pagan Gods," 10.

31 Bernardino de Sahagún, *General History of Things of New Spain*, book 3, prologue.

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important for later missionaries to be armed with the information that he had recorded.

Despite the prevalence of Augustine, we can still find evidence that suggests Isidore provided inspiration for archiving idolatry in the "New World." Within his *Etymologies*, "Isidore's persistent response to pagan religious belief is euhemerism, the interpretation of pagan divinities and mythological figures as in fact human beings wrongly elevated as supernatural creatures by benighted heathen."[32] Indeed, as Macfarlane attests, Isidore argues that "the names by which the gods are known were actually those of the original mortals, and the pagan poets were responsible for contriving false etymologies for them in order to credit these 'gods' with powers that they never had."[33] Within the *Florentine Codex* we find a very similar treatment of the Aztec gods. Here, Sahagún provides explanations of pagan gods as men honoured in death, deified through mythology, in order to dismiss the Mexica gods as false. Later codices in which the Aztec religion is detailed also follow this model, providing origin myths for these gods in order to demonstrate their lack of divine status, and to present them as empty icons.

Let us begin by examining the treatment of the "Old World" pagan gods by Isidore in his *Etymologies*. Book 8 explores the "gods of the heathens," describing that "those who the pagans assert are gods are revealed to have once been humans, and after their death they began to be worshipped among their people because of the life and merit of each of them."[34] Isidore holds the pagan poets responsible for the elevation of these mortals to divine status by crediting them with false powers.[35] He explains that:

> there were certain powerful men, or founders of cities, for whom, after they had died, the people who had been fond of them made likenesses, so that they might have some solace from contemplating these images. However, at the urging of demons, this error gradually crept into later generations in such a way that those, whom people had honoured only for the memory of their name, their successors deemed as gods and worshipped. The use of likenesses arose when, out of grief for the dead, images or effigies were set up, as if in place of those who had been received into heaven

32 Barney et al., *The Etymologies*, 19.
33 Macfarlane, "Isidore of Seville on the Pagan Gods," 9.
34 Isidore, *Etymologiae* 8.11.1.
35 Macfarlane, "Isidore of Seville on the Pagan Gods," 9.

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> demons substituted themselves to be worshipped on earth, and persuaded, deceived and lost people to make sacrifices to themselves.[36]

We can find this sentiment echoed in book 1 of the *Florentine Codex*, which details the gods that the Aztecs worshipped. The first chapter of this first book identifies Huitzilipochtli (Hummingbird from the Left), who was considered to be the principal deity of the Aztecs. A god of war, Huitzilipochtli was unlike many of the other gods that the Mexica worshipped, as he was an exclusively Aztec deity who was not celebrated by other peoples, and was thought to have been adopted when the empire began to develop and prosper, less than two hundred years before it would be defeated by the Spanish conquistadors in 1521. Despite being the first god to be named in the codex, Sahagún describes him as "only a common man, just a man, a sorcerer, an omen of evil; a madman, a deceiver, a creator of war, a warlord."[37] This reflects Isidore's account of the pagan gods in the *Etymologies* as simply mortal men who were later deified when their stories were recorded as legend.

Similarly, Sahagún also discusses another god who was celebrated by the Aztecs but also by other native peoples, Quetzalcoatl (Plumed Serpent). Sahagún describes Quetzalcoatl as a king of the Toltecs, a people who were greatly admired by the Aztecs. Sahagún likens the esteem in which Quetzalcoatl was held to how the English view King Arthur.[38] Though worshipped as a god of wind, Sahagún writes that he was a necromancer and merely a man. He was thought to have travelled east, and a prophecy predicted that he would return. Sahagún explains that this confused the Aztecs when the Spaniards first arrived, as they believed that Cortés (having arrived from the east) was the returning Quetzalcoatl.[39]

In the prologue to book 7 of the *General History*, Sahagún shows sympathy towards the native Mexicans for their ignorance in worshipping false gods, as

36 Isidore, *Etymologiae* 8.11.4–5.

37 Bernardino de Sahagún, *General History of Things of New Spain*, book 1 ("The Gods"), 1 (p. 1).

38 It is worth noting that the English could have been included here, and aligned with the Aztecs, because of their recent break from Catholicism—and therefore orthodoxy—making them heretics and therefore putting them on a par with pagans.

39 Bernardino de Sahagún, *General History of Things of New Spain*, introductory volume, prologue to book 8 (pp. 69–70). It is important to note that the idea that Cortés was mistaken for Quetzalcoatl and a reason why the Spaniards managed to defeat the Aztecs is one that has been debated by scholars for decades, but one that was firmly debunked by Camilla Townsend. For discussion, see: Camilla Townsend, "Burying the White Gods: New Perspectives on the Conquest of Mexico," *American Historical Review* 108 (2003), 659–87.

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it is clear that the forefathers of the Christians, the gentiles (both Roman and Greek) made the same error.

> How foolish our forefathers, the gentiles, both Greek and Latin had been in the understanding of created things is very clear from their own writings. From them it is evident to us what ridiculous fables they invented of the sun, the moon, some of the stars, water, land, fire and of the other created things. And what is worse, they attributed divinity to them, and they worshipped them, made offerings, made sacrifices to them, and revered them as gods.
>
> This originated in part from the blindness into which we fell through original sin and in part from the cunning, the long-standing hatred of our adversary, Satan, who always endeavours to incline us toward vile, ridiculous and very culpable things.
>
> So if this happened, as we know, among people of so much discretion and presumption, there is no reason for one to marvel that similar things are found among these people, so innocent and so easy to be deceived.[40]

Here we find a fundamental difference between Sahagún and Isidore, which would seem to negate the archbishop of Seville's influence upon the friar's thinking and perhaps also his method, as Isidore presents the Jews, and not the gentiles, as the precursors of the Christian message, albeit ignoring their own prophecies by refusing to accept Christ as the Messiah. Isidore certainly did not have a positive view of the Jews. For example, in his *De fide catholica contra Iudaeos*, Jews are described as ungrateful children, blind, hard of heart, and ignorant, and Judaism itself is presented exclusively as a negation of Christianity.[41] However, the Jews served a purpose in the development of Christian history, and Isidore considered Jewish feasts, laws, and customs as sacraments, which have to be regarded as signs pointing to Christian truth.[42]

Though Sahagún seems to have been influenced by Isidore in his methodology, there is a lack of clear evidence within the *Florentine Codex* of Isidore being used as an authority. Augustine instead takes a clearer role here, which makes sense given that Isidore was heavily influenced by Augustine himself. Nevertheless, we can trace a clear influence of the *Etymologies* in the later colonial period that provides more concrete evidence for Sahagún's reliance

40 Bernardino de Sahagún, *General History of Things of New Spain*, introductory volume, prologue to book 7.

41 Drews, *The Unknown Neighbour*, 137.

42 Drews, *The Unknown Neighbour*, 141.

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upon Isidore. In 1681, the Mexican-born creole Franciscan, Agustín de Vetancurt (1620–1700) accepted a commission to chronicle the activities of the order, resulting in his four-volume work, *Teatro Mexicano*, which was published between 1697 and 1698.[43] Along with detailing the activities of the Franciscans' missionary work, Vetancurt also chronicled the natural history of Mexico and Aztec culture, including native religion, and within *Teatro Mexicano* we find direct references to Isidore of Seville when Vetancurt discusses the false gods and idolatry of the native Mexicans. In Part 2 of the third treatise, Vetancurt details the gods of the Mexica with very specific reference to the pagan gods of Rome. In particular, Vetancurt labels Tezcalipoca as the Mexican version of Jupiter, and he cites information directly from Isidore's *Etymologies*, which explains that "The Romans have consecrated them [the planets] with the names of their gods, that is, Jupiter, Saturn, Mars, Venus and Mercury."[44] Within his explanations, Vetancurt finds a Roman equivalent for each of the principal Aztec deities. So, for example, Mars, the Roman god of war, becomes Huitzilipochtli, the Aztec god of war; and Tlaloc, the god of water and rain, is Neptune. Throughout this discussion, Vetancurt cites Isidore's *Etymologies*, clearly demonstrating his influence in the categorizing of the gods of the "New World" pagans. It is likely that Vetancurt's *Teatro Mexicano* was based heavily on earlier sources that he had at his disposal, as it is a chronicle of the earlier missionaries, rather than an original work on the Aztecs themselves. As such, it would suggest that Isidore did influence the earlier works that Vetancurt had at his disposal, such as the *Florentine Codex*.

4 Diego Durán

Another source that we can look to in order to assess Isidore's influence in this area is *The History of the Indies of New Spain*, which was completed in 1581 by the Dominican friar Diego Durán (1537–88). Durán was born in Seville and spent the majority of his life in Mexico, having come to New Spain as a small child. It is thought that he lived among the indigenous community of Texcoco, near Mexico City, for much of his life, and he was certainly well-versed in the culture of the natives, and fluent in the Nahuatl language.[45] Durán also worked

43 Stephanie Merrim, *The Spectacular City, Mexico and Colonial Hispanic Literary Culture* (Austin: 2012), 151.

44 Agustín de Vetancurt, *Teatro Mexicano* 2.3.7 (p. 70); Isidore of Seville, *Etymologiae* 3.71.21.

45 Ignacio Bernal, "Introduction," in *The Aztecs: The History of the Indies of New Spain*, eds. and trans. Doris Heydon and Fernando Horcasitas (New York: 1964), xxiii-xxiv.

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at the Indian school at Santiago Tlatelolco, and it is thought that he may have collaborated with Fray Bernardino de Sahagún.[46] However, unlike Sahagún's encyclopaedic work, which was written with the use of indigenous informants, Durán's chronicle was created with the use of pre-Conquest codices. Contemporaries considered Durán to be a lot more sympathetic towards the Nahua than Sahagún; for example, Garibay states that "While Sahagún sees visions and demons, another writer, Durán—with a more profound knowledge, with more human sympathy—had listened to ancient traditions told by the natives, since childhood."[47] Ignacio Bernal explains that: "These natives were still permeated with the ancient culture at Texcoco [and that, as such] Durán writes that 'All these chants are filled with metaphors so obscure that very few persons can understand them unless their significance is studied and discussed.'"[48]

Despite the different methods that they employed in archiving idolatry, Sahagún and Durán had the same intention. They are known today as historians, or ethnographers, due to the richness of the sources they created and their invaluable contribution to our modern understanding of the Aztecs, but as missionaries, their jobs were to convert the Nahua to Christianity. Therefore, the main point of recording the history and culture of the indigenous Mexicans was to enable other friars to gain a greater understanding of those who were to be converted. Like Sahagún, it would seem that Durán was frustrated by the lack of progress that had been made so far, and in order to avoid the continued superficial methods that had been employed by those who came before, the aim of his work was to "destroy ancient idolatry and false religion," a task impossible to achieve "no matter how hard we work if we do not understand the old religion profoundly."[49]

One of the ways in which understanding of the natives differed between missionaries was in how the friars identified them—who exactly they believed the Nahua were, or perhaps more to the point, what they were. There was a great divide between those who believed that the Mexica/Aztecs were pagan and those who understood them to be of Jewish origin, as one of the lost tribes of Israel. Sahagún was of the former opinion and Durán was of the latter, and as such their approaches to the history and culture of the indigenous people differ quite a lot. At the very beginning of his chronicle Durán states: "Because of their nature we could almost affirm that they are Jews and Hebrew people, and

46 Bernal, "Introduction," xxiv.
47 Bernal, "Introduction," xxx.
48 Bernal, "Introduction," xxx.
49 Bernal, "Introduction," xxi.

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I believe their way of life, their ceremonies, their rites and superstitions, their omens, and false dealings, so related to and characteristic of those of the Jews."[50]

In order to support his theory, Durán presents similarities between Nahua cultural practices and Jewish rites. These included: making sacrifices in the mountains, under shaded trees, burning incense, and killing sons and daughters in sacrifice, all of which he connects to Hebrew ceremonies practised by the ten tribes of Israel.[51] Durán also emphasized this connection due to the long journey the Aztecs undertook in finding their homeland, explaining that

> They always profess to have come from strange lands and I have found this depicted in their ancient printed manuscripts, where they portray the great periods of hunger, thirst and nakedness, with innumerable afflictions that they suffered until they reached this country and settled in it.[52]

Durán also presents the origin myths of the Aztecs as mirroring Genesis. For example, he states that "an aged man from Cholula, about a hundred years old, began to describe their origins to me […] 'In the beginning,' said this ancient man, 'before light or sun had been created, this world lay in darkness and shadows and was void of every created thing.'"[53]

Durán also relates a part of the Aztec origin myth that echoes the building of the tower of Babel and God's reaction to this act in having mankind dispersed in all directions. He describes the similarities between these accounts passed down through the generations to that which is found in Genesis as proof that "these natives belong […] to the lineage of the chosen people of God for who He worked great marvels."[54] Durán also finds parallels within the story of Moses, stating that

> The Indians have traditions regarding a great man who, after suffering many afflictions and persecutions on the part of his countrymen, gathered the multitude of his followers and persuaded them to flee from that persecution to a land where they could live in peace. Having made himself the leader of those people, he went to the seashore and moved the

50 Diego Durán, *History of the Indies of New Spain* 3.
51 Durán, *History of the Indies of New Spain* 1, 6.
52 Durán, *History of the Indies of New Spain* 1, 3.
53 Durán, *History of the Indies of New Spain* 1, 5.
54 Durán, *History of the Indies of New Spain* 1, 5.

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> water with a rod that he carried in his hand. Then the sea opened and he and his followers went through.[55]

Within Durán's discussion of Aztec origin myths, his portrayal also differs from Sahagún's account by presenting a people with one principal god (Huitzilipochtli), thereby further emphasizing similarities to the Hebrews and distancing them from the gentiles. Despite stressing their reliance upon one god, Durán does discuss seven others that the Aztecs "carried," whom he explains "represented the seven caves out of which the seven tribes had emerged" in order to seek the "Promised Land."[56] In a similar fashion to Sahagún, however, Durán seems to dismiss the status of these seven gods as true deities, claiming that they "had their titles to indicate godly superiority, as today's titles denote noblemen."[57] The one principal god of the Aztecs (Huitzilipochtli) is denigrated by Durán as a "devil," and his account of the origin myth also includes the story of "Huitzilhuitl" (Hummingbird Feather), which provides an account of this deified man's mortal life. This further dismisses the god, continuing the strategy of Isidore and Sahagún. Nevertheless, although this narrative would suggest that the seven lesser gods were not divine, and therefore just men as proposed by Sahagún and Isidore, Durán may also have been reinforcing the Aztecs' status as descendants of the Hebrews.

According to John Leddy Phelan, Durán's interpretation belongs to a current in 16th-century historiography which revolved around the conviction that the conquest was a divine punishment for the alleged sins that the indigenous people had committed.[58] This would also seem to be the idea behind other chronicles, such as those by Motolinía and Torquemada (1562–1624). Fray Toribio de Benevente Motolinía's *Historia de los Indios de la Nueva España*, which he started around 1536, lists the calamities that had befallen the Nahua since the arrival of the Spaniards, and he does so by presenting them as ten plagues reminiscent of the Ten Plagues of Egypt in Exodus. Among these "plagues" are the smallpox epidemic, the heavy tributes imposed upon the natives, and slave labour. These ideas are reminiscent of Isidore's portrayal of the history of the Jews prior to the birth of Christ in his *Greater Chronicle*, which, as Jamie Wood explains, is one of consistent and widespread misfortune.[59] In contrast to

55 Durán, *History of the Indies of New Spain* 1, 4.

56 Durán, *History of the Indies of New Spain* 3, 15.

57 Durán, *History of the Indies of New Spain* 3, 14–15.

58 John Leddy Phelan, *The Millennial Kingdom of the Franciscans in the New World*, 2nd ed. (Berkeley: 1970), 26.

59 Jamie Wood, *The Politics of Identity in Visigothic Spain: Religion and Power in the Histories of Isidore of Seville* (Leiden: 2012), 203.

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Durán, however, Motolinía is of the opinion that the Nahua were pagan, and his use of the ten plagues within the context of his work seems to imply a comparison between the Aztecs and the ancient Egyptians, another great pagan civilization that converted to Christianity.

5 Apocalyptic Thought

These differing ideas about conversion presented by the friars were also related to contemporary ideas on the Apocalypse. The Franciscan Gerónimo de Mendieta (1526–1604) was key to this. He wrote an exegesis of Luke 14 in which a host sent out three invitations to supper. According to Mendieta, the host is Christ and the supper that is being prepared is that of eternal happiness in heaven. The three invitations symbolize the different methods of converting the people of the three principal faiths still on the margins of Christianity: the Jews, the Muslims, and the gentiles, and the hour of the supper is the end of the world.[60] The first invitation was for the Jews, who should only need to have the "Truth of the Word" announced to them, as they were closest in nature to the Christians; the second was for the Muslims, who required more persuasion than the Jews through constant examples of correct living and good works. The hardest task was the conversion of the gentiles, as, unlike the Jews and Muslims, they had no prior knowledge of the Scriptures at all. These should be guided in a much more forceful manner, though there was little agreement regarding what this meant exactly. For example, the famous Dominican campaigner for indigenous rights, Las Casas (1484–1566), advocated an apostolic model of preaching and rational persuasion. Others, however, such as Las Casas's main opponent, Sepúlveda (1494–1573), stated that the third invitation corresponded to a time after Constantine (306–37) when the Church had gained a secular arm and could therefore coerce the gentiles into conversion.[61] Mendieta was in favour of a moderate use of coercion, if necessary, which was typical of many Franciscans, such as Motolinía, whereas in general the Dominicans were in favour of minimizing the use of force.[62]

It is possible that Isidore's views in this area, especially those regarding the conversion of the Jews, may have been influential. The first book of Isidore's *De*

60 Phelan, *The Millennial Kingdom of the Franciscans*, 7. For discussion see also: Jonathan Boyarin, *The Unconverted Self: Jews, Indians, and the Identity of Christian Europe* (Chicago: 2009), 49–50.

61 Phelan, *The Millennial Kingdom of the Franciscans*, 8–9.

62 Phelan, *The Millennial Kingdom of the Franciscans*, 10.

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fide catholica contra Iudaeos (*liber Ysidori contra Iudeos*) was printed in two editions prior to 1500, which meant that, according to Wolfram Drews, the anti-Jewish stereotypes reproduced by Isidore had an impact through the entire Middle Ages until the early modern period.[63] Drews attests that "an analysis of the argument in *de fide catholica* leads to the conclusion that the task of the church (and that of a Christian ruler) […] is limited to preaching the gospel among the Christian inhabitants of the kingdom."[64] Isidore describes a rational way to achieve faith by means of examples; force is said to be counterproductive.[65] Aside from the views presented in *de fide catholica*, Isidore was also openly critical of the forced baptisms of Jews during the reign of Sisebut, an attitude expressed in canon 57 of the Fourth Council of Toledo, which met in 633 under Isidore's presidency.[66] Free will is presented as crucially important here, and conversion is conceptualized as a mental act: as a voluntary answer of man to the Grace of God calling upon him.[67] As such, reason is advocated, rather than force, and this could have influenced the views of Las Casas.[68] Isidore's rejection of forced conversion could, however, merely reflect the fact that he was writing about events contemporary to him. Drews argues that Isidore believed that the conversion of the Jews would only occur at the end of times, and as such, attempts to convert the Jews in the present were not expected to succeed.[69] However, this is not to suggest that an attempt to convert the Jews would always be futile.

According to Apocalypse 7:4–9, the lost tribes of Israel were to reappear on the day of the Last Judgement. One of the most persistent ideas in apocalyptic literature was the belief that the Jews would be converted as the end of the world neared.[70] Mendieta suggested that the idea of a promised saviour—the Aztec god Quetzalcoatl—was of Hebraic origin, and that Quetzalcoatl was actually the Messiah. José de Acosta's 1590 *Historia natural y moral de las Indias*, however, characterized the Jewish-Indian hypothesis as frivolous conjecture.

63 Drews, *The Unknown Neighbour*, 4.

64 Drews, *The Unknown Neighbour*, 228.

65 Drews, *The Unknown Neighbour*, 233.

66 For discussion, see Raúl González Salinero's chapter in this volume.

67 Drews, *The Unknown Neighbour*, 221–22.

68 More concrete evidence for Isidore's influence on Las Casas can be found in discussions that he had with the Council of the Indies, in which Las Casas uses Isidore to verify his own reliability as a source by explaining that, according to Isidore's *Etymologiae*, only those who were eyewitnesses would be trusted to write history. See Anthony Pagden, "Introduction," in *Bartolomé de las Casas, A Short Account of the Destruction of the Indies*, ed. and trans. Nigel Griffin (London: 1992), xxxvi-xxxvii.

69 Drews, *The Unknown Neighbour*, 150.

70 Phelan, *The Millennial Kingdom of the Franciscans*, 24.

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The negative evidence seemed overwhelming to him. The Jews had an alphabet, which the American peoples lacked. The Jews, he claimed, were avaricious, the "Indians" were not. Circumcision was not practised among the gentiles of the "New World."[71] This view was, in turn, negated by those who did not consider the natives to be gentiles, and by Diego de Landa (1524–79) in particular, whose *Relación de las cosas de Yucatán*, written around 1566, was a study of the Maya, a people who certainly did have an alphabet, albeit one of a very different kind. Landa also recorded that the Maya practised circumcision. Mendieta attempted to answer Acosta by suggesting that the "Indians" could have forgotten the alphabet, the practice of circumcision, and the "avarice" of their ancestors, and Mendieta spared no pains in developing the parallel between Moses and Cortés.[72] According to Mendieta, the fact that Cortés was able to overthrow the powerful Aztec state with a mere handful of Spaniards revealed that he was leading a divine enterprise.[73]

Isidore of Seville's writings on the Apocalypse were certainly influential and may well have had a bearing upon conversion in the "New World." One of the key ideas that Isidore presented was his division of human history into six ages. His chronicles divided history accordingly, and therefore served to emphasize that everything that had happened since the Incarnation belonged to the Sixth Age.[74] According to Palmer, "the greatest consequence of this […] was that time was no longer an Augustinian 'mystery,' […Time] was finite, enclosed and measurable."[75] One of the best documented of all pre-Hispanic Mesoamerican myths is the story of the creation and destruction of a succession of world periods or ages. This is discussed by the likes of Andrés de Olmos (1485–1571), Bernardino de Sahagún, Diego Durán, Toribio de Motolinía, Gerónimo de Mendieta, and other 16th-century chroniclers, all of whom describe the Aztec belief in the creation and destruction of the world through several ages or "Suns."[76] The sources generally agree that the Aztecs believed that the world had passed through four cosmic ages before their time and that they were living in a fifth. They also concur that each of these great cosmic periods ended with a universal cataclysm in which the inhabitants of the ages were either destroyed

71 Phelan, *The Millennial Kingdom of the Franciscans*, 25.

72 Phelan, *The Millennial Kingdom of the Franciscans*, 25–26.

73 Phelan, *The Millennial Kingdom of the Franciscans*, 30. It is worth noting that this of course conveniently ignored the help that Cortés received from thousands of native auxiliaries.

74 James T. Palmer, *The Apocalypse in the Early Middle Ages* (Cambridge: 2014), 89.

75 Palmer, *The Apocalypse in the Early Middle Ages*, 90.

76 Wayne Elzey, "The Nahua Myth of the Suns: History and Cosmology in Pre-Hispanic Mexican," *Numen* 23 (1976), 114.

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or transformed into some form of animal or aquatic life.[77] Wayne Elzey explains that it was claimed that the four previous Suns, were

> 'imperfect worlds,' each of which had to be destroyed before the 'present age as the fifth and perfect creation can come into being.' The succession of the ages expresses 'the idea that the worlds which were continually being created were gradually nearing perfection,' [...] The fifth Sun is 'the synthesis of progress achieved in the earlier ages.' It is the 'final' age of the world because it represents the culmination and perfection of human culture and history.[78]

Elzey finds it striking that all sources of the myth are silent on the possibility of any future Suns following the fifth age, and he claims that a sixth Sun was inconceivable.[79] It may have been inconceivable to the Aztecs, but we must remember that the missionaries who documented these beliefs did so through the lens of their own understanding of who the Nahua were, all the while attempting to fit this culture into their European worldview. It is possible, therefore, that the destruction of the fifth sun equated the demise of the Aztec religion. This could suggest the influence of Isidore regarding the idea that mankind was living in the final (sixth) age, in which the end of the world would come.

According to West, the most important apocalyptic writer and exegete of prophecy in the Middle Ages was the 12th-century Calabrian abbot Joachim of Fiore (*c.*1135–1202), whose significant contribution to the Western intellectual tradition was to develop a persuasive outline of how the history of mankind would evolve through three successive stages, culminating in an age of the Holy Spirit.[80]

> The first two ages were guided by the Father and the Son, respectively. The Third Age of history, that of the Holy Spirit, he foresaw as a period of peace and harmony in which a renewed church would encompass a reformed people devoted to the contemplative life. [...] The 'New Spiritual Men' who would convert the world. [...] Very early in their history,

77 Elzey, "The Nahua Myth of the Suns," 117–18.
78 Elzey, "The Nahua Myth of the Suns," 120.
79 Elzey, "The Nahua Myth of the Suns," 130.
80 West, "Medieval Ideas of Apocalyptic Mission," 294.

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> some Franciscans believed themselves to be that evangelical order of the third age.[81]

This would appear to differ quite significantly from Isidore's idea of six ages, and perhaps negate his influence. However, according to Wood: "elsewhere in his writings Isidore refers to a three-fold division of history."[82] In the *Etymologies* Isidore states that: "the first age is before the Mosaic law, the second under the law, the third under grace [… It is because] of these three ages of the world that the resurrection of the Lord is on the third day."[83] This is shown by Wood to be reiterated in Isidore's commentary on Genesis: "that three day period […] signifies the three ages of the world. […] the third is the day of grace. In which third age, just like after the three day period, the sacrament of the sacrifice of Christ is completed."[84]

Isidore seems to have taken this idea of the three ages from Augustine, and as such, it is unlikely that he influenced Fiore's ideas in this area directly, if at all. Nevertheless, it is conceivable that some of Isidore's ideas on the Apocalypse may have trickled down to Franciscans involved in the Spiritual Conquest of Mexico via the ideas of Joachim of Fiore, through the writings of Beatus of Liébana (*c*.730–*c*.800). According to Williams, Beatus's *Commentary on the Apocalypse* included a map of the world that was prompted by his inclusion of *De Apostolis* from Isidore's *Etymologiae*, along with "a short portion of […] *De ortu et obitu patrum* sometimes attributed to Isidore, in which the Apostle James' mission was to convert Hispania."[85] In turn, according to Poole, Joachim of Fiore uses calculations that echo those of Beatus in order to explain the seven seals that are broken during the events of the Apocalypse.[86] Further to this, Poole explains that due to the crusading nature of the Reconquista (*c*.718/722–1492), "there developed in Spain a belief that there would exist at some point in the near future a 'Last World Emperor' who would turn his earthly empire over to God in Jerusalem."[87] This tradition was influenced by Joachimite ideas and

81 West, "Medieval Ideas of Apocalyptic Mission," 294.
82 Wood, *Politics of Identity in Visigothic Spain*, 123.
83 Isidore, *Etymologiae* 6.17.16.
84 Wood, *Politics of Identity in Visigothic Spain*, 123.
85 John Williams, *Visions of the End in Medieval Spain: Catalogue of Illustrated Beatus Commentaries on the Apocalypse and Study of the Geneva Beatus*, ed. Therese Martin (Amsterdam: 2017), 23.
86 Kevin R. Poole, "Beatus of Liébana: Medieval Spain and the Othering of Islam," in *End of Days: Essays on the Apocalypse from Antiquity to Modernity*, eds. Karolyn Kinane and Michael A. Ryan (Jefferson: 2009), 47–66, 58.
87 Poole, "Beatus of Liébana," 56.

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prophecies attributed to Isidore.[88] As such, it is possible that in some respects Isidore may have influenced the Franciscans via Beatus and then Fiore, or directly through Fiore.

6 Conclusion

A major obstacle to assessing Isidore's reception, and something that could also have proved a barrier to Isidore's influence, was the way in which the missionary works themselves were treated by contemporaries. Many of them were considered inappropriate, or even potentially dangerous, due to the detailed discussion of idolatry they contained, meaning that their fate was to remain unpublished until the 19th or even 20th century, thereby minimizing their reach. For example, as Parry explains:

> The attitude of the Council of the Indies, and of Spanish high officialdom in general, towards Indian studies was always ambiguous. It varied from decade to decade, with the political situation and with the personality of the president of the Council for the time being. There were periods of blanket prohibition, when anyone known to be engaged in such studies might have his papers seized. This happened to Sahagún, who lost the fruit of twenty years' work.[89]

Mendieta suffered a similar fate, as he was considered to be politically subversive due to his outright hostility to Philip II (1527–98), whose policy of "Hispanicization" of the "Indians" was aimed at restricting the friars' power and influence in the "New World." Mendieta reiterated a conviction shared by most of the friars: that Christianity should be superimposed upon the old pagan social structure, all of which should be carefully preserved provided it did not clash directly with the new religion.[90] Mendieta suspected that Spain's failure to crush the heretics in Europe and to convert the Chinese were hints that God was turning against his chosen people of the New Testament. Spain's inhumanity toward the "Indians" was making her an unworthy instrument of God's will.[91] According to Mendieta, Philip's reign was an apocalyptical catastrophe.

88 Poole, "Beatus of Liébana," 56.

89 J.H. Parry, "Juan de Tovar and the History of the Indians," *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 121 (1977), 317.

90 Phelan, *The Millennial Kingdom of the Franciscans*, 87–89.

91 Phelan, *The Millennial Kingdom of the Franciscans*, 107.

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The Spanish government responded by banishing Mendieta's works, and the *Historia eclesiástica indiana* was not published until 1870.[92]

We can see from the evidence presented in this chapter that there is a strong likelihood that Isidore's *Etymologies* were influential in the creation of encyclopaedias in the "New World" for the purpose of extinguishing the idolatrous practices of the natives. However, in some cases it would seem that Augustine's *City of God* was preferred as a model for those who believed the Nahua to be pagans. Nevertheless, despite the importance of Augustine in the discussion of pagan practices, many of the "New World" "ethnographers" actually viewed the Aztecs as having been descended from the Jews, and in this case Isidore's ideas on the conversion of the Jews and his Apocalyptic writings may have been particularly helpful in the fight against idolatry in the "New World." It is clear that Isidore's writings were referenced and directly quoted by influential figures, such as Columbus, Las Casas, and Vetancurt. However, attempting to trace Isidore's influence is not straightforward, and it would appear that at times this passed through one or even two later writers first, such as Beatus of Liébana and Joachim of Fiore, which makes the task more difficult, and leads to rather speculative conclusions. It is also fair to say that the extent of Isidore's influence in the "New World," especially regarding archiving idolatry, has been limited by the treatment of works, such as Sahagún's *Florentine Codex*, which were not published until the 19th century or later. Counter-Reformation anxieties about the spread of heresy and continuation of idolatry arguably frustrated the conversion process. Works designed to provide the missionaries with the information they needed to more effectively eradicate idolatry, by providing a deeper understanding of native practices, were deemed inappropriate or dangerous and kept out of circulation. The loss of these works, and ultimately the methodology provided by Isidore for archiving idolatry, ultimately led to a more superficial and difficult conversion of the indigenous people, the success of which is still questionable today in some parts of rural Mexico. Tracing Isidore's influence in the process of archiving idolatry is a difficult task, but his influence is definitely identifiable and something that would merit further examination.

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